

RHYMES
OF A
TOILER.

BY THEODORE WILLIAMS.

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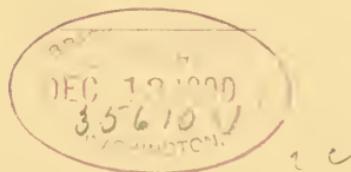
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





RHYMES OF A TOILER.

BY
THEODORE WILLIAMS.



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AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

TO

MY MOTHER,

BY THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

THE author of these verses (or doggerel, if you will) would join the large army of writers, not as an officer, but simply as a raw recruit, undrilled and ignorant of the simple manual of arms. He confesses his rawness, which is painfully evident, and pleads the couplet,

“ ‘Tis pleasant, sure, to see one’s name in print ;
A book’s a book, although there’s nothing in’t,”

as an excuse for printing, coupled with this: if there is one line bringing courage to the desirer, or faith to the doubter, or firmness to the waverer,—yea, if there is one helpful or inspiring thought, however harshly spoken, he is amply satisfied. Shut in a factory for years, amidst the dust and noise of whirling wheels,—his trade a polisher,—these have proved to be as “a light shining in a dark place,” urging him on to the cheerful and faithful doing of every

irksome task, and touching up all tools with the colors of fancy, until he and his work seemed a part of the vast ongoing of things,—a link or joint in the correlation of forces, which make for a loftier and nobler civilization.

“Who alive can say,
‘Thou art no poet—may’st not tell thy dreams’?
Since every man whose soul is not a clod
Hath visions and would speak, if he had loved,
And been well nurtured in his mother tongue.”—KEATS.

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RHYMES OF A TOILER.

A N H U M B L E H O M E.

At twilight's hour, what phantoms scale
And over crowd fond Fancy's pale!
What forms and visions, uncontrolled,
Invade and claim the mind's stronghold!
And as these wander to and fro
(Worthy of Hogarth's studio),
I see an ugly, narrow street
(Remote from fashion's promenade),—
A small frame dwelling, white and neat;
The frontage bare of any shade
Or greening plant, save here a knot
Of thick-leaved grass for terrace plot;
The walks of brick, a treeless yard
Of twoscore feet for flowers and sward;
And this enclosed with latticed fence,
To guard from childish violence.

And in its bed the old-time flowers
That court the sun and dare the showers,
And to our fancy never lose
The virgin freshness they diffuse:
Wall-flower, pansy, violet;
The coins with which spring pays her debt;
Honeysuckle and climbing rose;
Color and odor in repose;
Sweet-william and bland heliotrope,
The perfumed coronet of hope;
Portulaca, geranium's fire,
The suitable badge of rage and ire;
And others that improve with age,
Tufted dahlia and scarlet sage;
And those that tell the season's range
Of beauty, ring its gradual change
From meagre gift to overplus:
The fuchsia and convolvulus!
But in the race to crown the top
Of sagging fence or crannied wall,
The cypress, thief-like, climbs and twines
Above the reach of other vines,
That it may boast a richer crop;
Once over these, to crown it all,
Its stars blaze out and pale and fall!

And in the house, unpanelled doors,
Little-paned windows, shaky floors,

Both rough and seamy ; whitened walls
And bulging ceilings, clean of scrawls,
And gold-fringed dado ; wide-stepped stairs,
Creaky and steep, that lead to rooms
Smelling of nature's old perfumes,
Strong bergamot and lavender,
Which gambol with each airy stir,
And scent our garments unawares.

Each room reflects the form of use,
Cosy and clean ; with draperies
To hush the bang of windows loose,
And soften down the sun's bright beams ;
And carpet, too, of ruddy dyes,
To hide the floor's unputtied seams.
And stepping lightly thro' the house,
You hear the scramble of the mouse,
Or buzz of fly ; but puffs of musk
Entice to a chamber, hushed and dusk,
Graced by a motley quilted bed,
With massive posts and carvèd head
And lace-edged pillows, feathered deep
(The harmless opiate for sleep) ;
The rest ungraceful furniture,
But made and jointed to endure ;
Uneaseful chairs, that seem to me
But shaped for household pillory ;

And hard, low stools, intended for
The vengeance-struck inquisitor.
And in a square, a bureau broad
And high, with its sweet-smelling hoard
Of clothes and linen; keepsakes dear,
Embalmed by many a sob and tear;
Trinkets or books or flaxen curls,—
Memoirs of mother's missing pearls.
And o'er its glassless top are set
The treasure-box, sea-shells, and vase
(The bric-a-brae and cabinet),
And square daguerreotypes of friends,
Now looking thro' a silver haze,
And these upon a figured cloth,
With checkered mesh and tasselled ends;
And on the wall a sketch of Spring
Fleeing the cold clasp of the North.
And Man, the sower, following.
Or happy-featured June is seen
(Meriting fame or beauty's niche),
Peering over a garden screen,
Her apron full of jewels rich,
And some are lost or tumble down
To catch in the loose fold of her gown.
'Tis strange a room should know a weird
That memory's visits have endeared;
A chimney's nook become a stall

For woe and care's confessional ;
A covered stool and clumsy chair,
A homely shrine and altar, where
A publican could safely lift
His soul in prayer, and bring his gift,
A contrite heart, for sacrifice ;
And taste a sacramental juice
Would warm the heart of grief's recluse !

And to this room, not over nice,
The mother brought her erring child
When mirth or mischief, running wild
And loud, required a wholesome check ;
And with her arm about his neck,
And cheek to cheek, and gentle speech
Between her smiles, she strove to teach
His rash desires life's discipline ;
And, kneeling, begged for inward light
To see the way and walk therein ;
To guide his aimless thoughts aright,
And give his conscience healthy growth ;
And of God's grace that falls to both,
May it continue to life's close.
And like the first whiff of a rose,
These prayers and pleadings, deeply wrought
A safe admonisher o'er the thought
That in the future oft did come,

When other monitors were dumb,
To warn of danger, and to quell
A spirit oft intractable.
Nor will I slight the large front room
That showed the sway of brush and broom
The cushioned settee in a nook,
The shelf above, with many a book ;
And o'er the mantel a doleful print
Of Wesley's death ; a card of thanks,
Tricolored, for a gift of lint
Sent to the maimed of Union's ranks.
Across two of heroic mould :
Chivalrous Scott and Taylor bold.
And opposite, a looking-glass
Mirrored a strangely-jumbled mass :
The pewter lamps atrim and clean,
Each with its scalloped, fluted screen ;
The table's damasked cloth, so white,
The blue-lined service, large and bright
(The tonic for an appetite) ;
The chafed rag carpet, and a rug
On which the dog lay warm and snug ;
The red square of the cumbrous stove,
Braced by the chimney's smoky cove ;
And in its wave-like, winning heat
The noisy children found a seat,—
Busy and gay, and full of speech,

With joke and prank absorbing each ;
Of simple playthings not a lack :
The pink-cheeked doll, and jumping-jack ;
The little sleigh and horse and cart,
So dear to every youngster's heart ;
The hollow top's incessant hum
Of other frolics, yet to come ;
The pictured rhymes of Mother Goose,
And puzzling games, that made a truce
With every task ; and for the hour
The place was surely pleasure's bower.

And near, a poplar cradle stood,
Holding a gift of motherhood :
A happy-featured, lively girl,
With fine, firm skin, and blond-like curl ;
The which a boy would ofttimes swing
To catch her smile of welcoming ;
And he, though rough, could not resist
The coaxing mouth and doubled fist ;
Would press her to his yearning lips,
Or suck her rosy finger-tips ;
Or bob and dance her on his knee,
To see her gray eyes shine with glee ;
Or ribboned ring or ball was swung,
To loose her often babbling tongue ;
But the deep flushes of her cheek

Foretold the joy she fain would speak ;
Or on his back, her whim to please,
Would waddle slow on hands and knees ;
Or gently sway her in his arms,
And laud her soft, expanding charms ;
Yet sometimes prone, with steady look
Fixed on some verse or story-book
(The mind lured by the siren theme),
His hand would slip the pleasant task,
Till low cries from the gauzy mask
(Her sleep disturbed by some wild dream)
Aroused him, then with numbèd hand
Would rock her back to slumber-land.
Later, without one warning note,
A cruel, eager bane assailed :
The household's darling drooped and paled,
And pinched her face, and clogged her throat ;
While pain held carnival within,
And fever blazed from eye and skin,
And burned the beautiful away
Till naught was left but blighted clay.
Nor was it strange they were aghast,
Because disease consumed, so fast,
That Death but snipped the pretty germ
To yield his victim to the worm ;
But Faith, at last, brought sure relief
To their incessant, poignant grief,

And whispered, while their hearts despond,
"Her stainless self is just beyond!"

But to the boy her absence blent
The thoughts of harm and banishment ;
Nor did the Pastor's words suppress
The drugless thrusts of loneliness ;
And often, when alone from choice,
Hugging his woe, perhaps, too much,
He hears again her prattling voice,
And feels her warm, quick, anxious touch
And tighter clasping of her hands,
That mean (he plainly understands)
Release me from my pillow'd cell,
And free my limbs, all cramped so long ;
And sing to me my favorite song ;
And play the tricks I love so well ;
And with my laughing eyes I'll pay
The toll you claim from day to day ;
And then she smiles, and winks, and nods
(More potent than a thousand rods),
As if the angels heard her vow
And stamped their sanction on her brow ;
But soon the pretty vision fades
Into a weeping group in crape,
Bearing a white and rigid shape
To the dark vault's abhorrent shades.

Ah! this and more besiege his heart,
And strain and tear the wounds apart;
But Love, moved by his loss, will give,
And freely too, some palliative:
Yea, bring the Comforter divine
And Time's elusive anodyne.

Now, I enter the self-same room
And chase away all thoughts of gloom,
And like a guest accept a seat,
Eat of the children's mimic feast
That lacks not any sugared want;
And near me rocks the easy chair
(The throne of state they often share),
Waiting its royal occupant,
The halting Mother (horn and drum's
Discord salutes her as she comes),
Wearing the chrism of womanhood,
A stainless name; and all the good
Snatched from the hands of grief and pain,
Through all the pangs of threescore years,
Is proof and warrant for her reign;
And longer worn the more endears!
Her rule is just, the only art
The sure appeals to mind and heart.

The household's queen with means to please,
Excelling courtly courtesies;

And these her noisy liegemen true
(Whose acts of love have been too few),
Exalt and laud her sterling worth,
More rich than any prize of earth.
No queenly hand could kindlier bless,
Nor eye beam sweeter graciousness;
And every woe, and want, distress,
Bestirred her genuine sympathy;
And quivering lip and suffused eye
But glassed a brimming tenderness;
The cheerful glance and placid brow
But proved the soul had kept its vow
Of swerveless fealty to God:
Despite the chastening scourge and rod;
The shining face and silvered hair
Were not belaborings of despair,
But strivings of long eare and toil,—
These shown in roughened hands and palms,
While life was spending wine and oil
For others' sake; yet all elate
And ever hopeful, singing psalms,
Believing cares would soon abate;
And from her tongue such discourse flowed,
It wrought a charm in this abode;
Though terse and homely, 'twas not less
Fresh with its word of helpfulness.
And to the timid, tired, or faint

(Poor hungry souls that seldom heard
From one as burdened one kind word)
It seemed the warm speech of a saint ;
And to her reason love sufficed
To teach all hearts the laws of Christ !

To make these insipid verses smack
Of home-made cates, I'll hasten back
Over the road of vanquished years,
Whose mile-posts loom with stains of tears,
To greet the Mother hourly tasked,
For she bestowed her inward strength,
And only strength she craved and asked
(And who but God can tell its length ?)
To keep her children from the mire
Of ignorance, and want, and vice
(And this her greatest benefice,
Her teacher life-experience) ;
To feed the soul's increasing fire
On the bright hearth of innocence
With sagest wisdom,—these her aims,
And Time confirms her holy claims.
And Love, in one o'erwhelming gush
Of tingling feeling, kneels and speaks
(Prompted by deeds she would not hush) :
“I know what anguish paled her cheeks,
What nameless tortures racked her flesh,

What dreadful horrors plagued her soul ;
Nor do I speak to make them fresh,
Or scare her feet from yonder goal ;
But just to show that she could serve,
And from her duty never swerve ;
What burdens bear that others spurned,
And break the loaf herself had earned,
In sweat and tears and worrying ;
Yet freely gave of everything,
Without one envious, selfish thought,
Save of the pleasure she had wrought.

“ Ah, I recall when ills befell
And snapt the ties she loved so well
(As one by one her darlings passed
To Heaven, where she shall come at last),
And when the stealthy fever flame
Burned and wasted her sturdy frame ;
And when the work would rack-like twist
The aching head and fagged-out wrist ;
And if the very air grew black,
Yet was her purpose not to slack
Or stop, but, slipping from her chair,
She sought the needed strength in prayer ;
Though midnight passed, her head was bent
Till God bestowed the nourishment,

Then plying fingers, twirling wheel,
Disclosed the firmness of her zeal.

“And running through her busy days
(Like strings of pearl), her helpful ways
And graceful tact of doing good
Were known about the neighborhood
(These are not lights that bushels hide,
But beacons shining far and wide).
If some one, sudden stricken ill,
With care and want to add their curse,
She ran to aid with all her skill
(And just as prompt to use her purse),
And brought some relishable dish
As an earnest of her hearty wish
To soothe and comfort the ailing one;
Nor deemed her kindness fitly done
(If the grave doctor or the nurse
But vaguely hinted she was worse)
Without a verse, in tone and look
Beseechful, from our Father’s Book;
And prayer to Him that always heeds
The sufferer’s plaints, and knows her needs;
And, better, holds the failless cure,
Whose touch and palliative are sure,—
The Healer, whose exquisite art
Can lull the deepest twinge and smart,

And, best of all, controls the charm
That robs lean Death of power to harm.
And while she prayed, a holy calm,
Which to the sick one was a balm,
Possessed the humble, narrow room,
Like odors from an unseen bloom ;
Nor was it in the face alone,
Or clasp, that sympathy was shown
Her pleadful accents were so true,
That sweetest seemed her warm adieu!"

But now a happier time is come,
And other hands support the home ;
And patient life has lived, to see
The sure success of industry ;
The hardships and economies
Have brought content and slippered ease ;
And comfort too, a liberal share
Of leisure-tempting couch and chair :
And Plenty, chaste and temperate,
Prepares and spreads a generous course
(With family porcelain, glass and plate
Without the gourmand's wine and sauce)
Of wholesome viands, cates and fruits ;
And conversation flows, that suits
The pleasant hour, with but a bowl
Of Mocha's juice to warm its soul :

Replete with banter, jest, and wit;
And after this they idly sit,
While Music, with a dulcet air,
Immures all vexing thought and care,
Cooing of dreamless sleep and rest,
And pipes good-night to every guest.

SUGGESTIONS.

FROM my suburb eastern windows Nature's pastimes
I behold,
Through the elephantine vapors Morning rolls its disk
of gold.

Or the clouds run chariot races with the goal far
out of sight,
Or the serried foliage wrestles with the wind and
curbs its flight.

Or the storm, a gladiator, whose arena is aglow
With his crinkled, flaming javelins, lays the oak or
poplar low.

Or the Night calls jewelled Taurus, as a sacrifice to
Jove,
While the moon elbows the darkness thro' the field
and thro' the grove.

THE OCEAN.

BEFORE me whirled the onset of the waves
Aflush with sunshine's warm farewell ; I said,
"Vast, mighty, and forever restless one,
Thou Samson of the waters in thy strength,
And Samson, too, in thy blind, furious wrath,
What hidden spirit called or brought thee forth ?
Who cheered thee thro' thy infancy and youth,
And wed thee to the earth, thy constant bride ?
Who nursed, and fed, and led thee thro' the years,
And now sustains and trains thy sumless powers ?
Or didst thou spring a briny Pallas, armed
With force and grandeur, fickle as the May,
Forth from black chaos ? Nay : methinks I hear
A voice above the hoarse sounds of thy voice,
That penetrates like light, and says : the God,
The great, good God enwombed thee, shaped thy form,
Thy ceaseless-pulsing breast, I gaze upon ;

Gave thee the boon of strength and pithy youth,
And mixed thy very life-blood with the Earth's
By His invisible hand. What dost bring,
Rude Ocean, to thy rich and radiant queen,
Save of the wreck and blanchèd shell and stone,
Or spumy weed? And tho' she seems afraid,
And shrinks, and trembles, she doth bare her
charms:—

The fleecy turbanned head, and hair anointed
With ointment drawn from day and evening's breath;
The bosom screened by rose-embossèd vests;
And over plump shoulders, a scarf of flowers;
And thro' the tulle-like draperies, the shape
Of rounded thigh and limb, as fair as Hebe's,
Show finely to her clover-slipped feet;
And more,—brings thee her choice delectables."
Then Ocean's century-mellowed bass was heard:
"O rash defamer! Earth has been my first
And only love, my true patrician spouse,
Since God, our righteous Guide, and Priest, and King
(And here his voice takes on a reverent tone),
Created us and bore us in His arms,
Twin prodigies, till grown full strong,
And capable of finishing His scheme;
Then were the banns proclaimed and we were wed!
But æons past, each soul had longed for each:
Ever since Sol, our tireless comforter,

With Time as watcher, sent thro' leagues of blue
The splendor of his quenchless oriflamme ;
Since Night, her purple gown all diamonded,
Evoked a blessing on our nuptial feast.

“ I own my clasp is hard and fierce to her ;
My heavy respirations flecked with foam ;
My arm-encirclings harsh and passionate ;
My life’s devotion sealed with cold, white lips ;—
And yet, my heart enthrobs for only her ;
Nor do I seek her presence dowerless :
My gifts are strange, and rich, and beautiful
As her’s ; the coral, pearl, and tell-tale shell
Are simply largesses, but passing clues
Of what in hugest quantities I hold
For her and her vain, pampered, shiftless child,
The unwise Esau Man.” But I, emboldened
By his eloquence, and promise of thrift,
His breathing’s moisture cool upon my cheek,
Answered, “ Ocean, exert thyself once more !
Combine thy powers to show the jealous Earth
The finest, sweetest earnest of thy love ;
And then her summer life will be complete.
With dash of wave, and lightest toss of spray,
Baptize her heated brow, and cheeks, and lips,
And cool her fevered limbs and feet. And yet
Another grander favor I would ask :

O Sea! bestir thyself to carry out,
Beyond our acute ear and watchful ken,
Our plaint of pain and moan of misery;
Our dark despairs and darker treacheries;
Our blind belief and strange our unbelief;
Our shrieks of rage and pessimistic cries;
Our shrugs, and frowns of hate, revengeful scowls;
Our hard, perturbing acts and ignorance;
The sophistry that brands man animal,
With wheel-like motions, nerves, and gross desires;
Our thoughtless, nameless crimes and egotism;
Our eager, sateless hungering for gold;
Our clans and creeds and hot disputes;—
And all that veils the soul from love and truth,
That stunts the moral growth, and dwarfs the will,
That thwarts the noble scheme and just endeavor;—
Drown these so deeply, that the wings of th' wind
Bear no tidings of their dirgeless burial!

“Impetuous Sea! confirm my dearest wish,
And carry in a hope oracular,
More potent for the hour and its large needs
Than Dodona’s oaks evolved. Yes, a hope,
Girt by a halo fresh from God’s broad brow,
To draw and raise the hurt, but earnest soul,
Towards a great and curative sympathy;
To warm its faintest yearnings for the good

Into a rare, white flame ; its wavering steps
Make firm and steady, like a runner's strides
That hold more briskness, as they near the goal ;
A hope assuring all good expectations,
Ay, sealing the spiritual nature dominant.

“ And hurry, strongest bass of all the choir
In God's cathedral, with a fuller love
Than e'er has soothed the peevish, ailing man,
Sheathed in a faith as stout and vigorous
As grand Elijah grasped ; a godlike love
That will consume our glooms and phantasies,
Like Sol's sharp rapier, the priests of Baal
Destroyed, for Error's warning epitaph !

“ A love armored with the pure emanations
Of the holy laws, first issued in Heaven ;
A love that permeates our goodliest self,
That tones our honest sympathy
To the heart-throe of scourged humanity ;
So tender, that it feels a ruthful beat
To see the swift convulsions of a fly,
Lured to its quick fate by a kitchen lamp !
A love that wears the smile of Deity,
Caught from an intercourse of prayerful years :
This gracious smile linked to a Christian speech,
Redolent with truth and helpfulness.

And for Love's congenial helpmeet, joy
Like that which rapt the Fisherman
On the dazzling Mount of Transfiguration.

“O Sea! thy hugest waves, for stepping-stones,
Heap high, for lo, they come! The wind their
steeds,
The splendid moonbeams their pearly chariot,
Surpassing Neptune's; now they disembark,
These divine sprites, and walk the crumbling sands
To blow the healthy airs of Paradise
O'er our sick world, and kill its venomous airs.

“And now expectant, testy man give thanks,
Tho' the great light has smitten purblind eyes,
Like sight and courage of defiant Saul
Was struck, yet bound his spirit to the Christ;
So thou, affirm to own their leadership,
Where'er they lead; up the sharp steep
Or down the awful, pitch-black gorge of life;
But strip thyself of every useless tool,
And husband up thy brawn to bear a load
Would daunt an Atlas or a Hercules!

“Yes, onward now their mandate reads, and thou,
Inspired anew, will urge the march and fight,
And call thy brethren on to fill the gaps,

Till Victory wave her pennon from the breach.
Though limping, bleeding, panting, ragged, grimed,
Though thirst knaws at the life, and hunger too,
These lovely, holy sisters rush to greet you,
And kiss your blistered lips, and pat your palms,
And pour their consolations, softly saying,
'Another battle won, we now advance
Towards the city of Gold!' And looking down,
Lo, on his tattered coat a medal shines,
Like king's insignia, 'tis the Holy Grail!

"And over them Night tilts her burnished cup,
Kept brimful by Time's happy servitors,
To bind the sacred covenant anew;
And jewelled vestals, as they pass in grand
Procession up the Milky Way, flash down
On them and me an endless benediction!
And from stilled Heaven, dyed a sapphire blue—
(The audience chamber of the Infinite)—
Slips thro' the magic word of all the ages, 'Peace!'"

LOVE.

DIFFUSIVE essence of creative God,
Centurion of space and life and time,
Alone, thou art the king whose crown and rod
Are sullied not with crime.

Whose throne and empire dwarf the works of art,
Fixed far beyond the clash of laws and creeds,
Where the impulses of thy mighty heart
Are wrought to perfect deeds.

Ere chaos was, or beam, or tone, or wave,
Ere seraph sang of thee, or kissed thy rod,
Thou livest; and will survive the shroud and grave,—
The royal one with God !

Thou speak'st, and noble woman, wreathed in kindness,
And habited in tenderest sympathies,
Commands the heart, and lights our stumbling blindness
With look of pleading eyes.

And, grander yet, ascends her chosen path
With an unfaltering faith and deathless trust,
And, like Medea, brings good will from wrath,
And soul from worthless dust.

Anon thou speak'st, the pure-intentioned youth,
Large-brained, strong-sinewed, battles for the right,
As if he were the pioneer of Truth,
Mailed with eternal might,

Or manhood, graced with superhuman strength
Of thought and action, silences the strife;
Upbuilds and delves and sows until, at length,
Appears a richer life.

And even on silvered age's wrinkled lips
A smile is mingled with a twitch of pain;
As if a life just gloomed by death's eclipse
Would bless thy name again.

And passing through the portals of the home,
Thy smile and voice of cheer define it real;
And man, the fickle nomad, now has come
To stay, wedded for woe or weal!

Whether in battle heat or prison cell,
Or hall or hut, mandate, rebuke, or plea,
Thy wondrous eloquence doth sweep and swell
Into an ecstasy!

When hate, and spite, and greed, and woe, and grief
Seem moment rulers of the heart and brain,
Thou dost arise, our forlorn hope and chief,
And reassert thy reign.

And nature, too, applauds thy hidden sway
From far-off Sirius to the nameless germ ;
And beast, and bird, and reptile, in their day,
Declare thy ceaseless term.

Thou charm and talisman and lord of powers,
Thou central figure of life's brightest scenes,
Hast taught the past thro' all its murky hours ;
The present on thee leans.

Thou art the sole patrician of the race,
The bond of brotherhood, and hope, and ruth,
The head and heart of every gift and grace,
Robed in perennial youth.

The alpha and omega of the whole,
Philosophy's best wisdom, Freedom's fire ;
My spirit's inspiration, keep my soul
And soothe when I expire !

Come, dearest, and witness the going sun,
What length and breadth of splendor in its wake !
As if a new career were to be run,
Or God renewed its radiance for our sake,

That we might know that He alone is King,
And this only a gem of His signet ring!

One hour ago the summer gust was driven
Across the gold of sun and blue of sky ;
Now not a remnant of a cloud sweeps by
To hide the beauty of the stars in Heaven,
And when our high desires are overcast,
God's stars of hope shall surely shine at last !

LOVE.

LOVE, the peerless, came along,
Stirred our spirits by her song,
And reversed man's dire decrees,
Gave us health for flushed disease ;
Rest in labor, joy in trial,
Happiness in self-denial ;
Blent her soul in all our deeds,
And sustained us in our needs.

We had dreamed that she should come
Like a victor to his home,
Bearing trophies from afar,
Knighted with Fame's glowing star ;

Or a king in royal state,
Medalled wise and brave and great.

Lo! she came just like a friend,
Pure and changeless to the end,
Ripe and sound to her heart's core.
Hark! a knock upon the door,
Come away, thou usher, Pride,
She is known to those inside—
We would welcome one so dear!
Welcome, Love, and then the meeting:
Broken words of sincere greeting
Between kisses, hearts a-beating:
“We are glad to see thee here.
Thou art now our genial guest,
And whatever be thy quest,
We will bless thee, grant thee rest.

“Doff thy garb of dust and travel
And forego the whirl and strife;
With thine aid we may unravel
The dark tangle we call life;
Come, and wander thro' the house,
Where no evil dare carouse;
On through each frequented room,
We have toiled to set in order;
Hoping thou wouldst be its warder,
And the sunshine for its gloom.

“ Melancholy has gone out,
Lest thy smiles should lighten it;
Envy, too, with frown and pout,
Lest thy speech should frighten it.
Heated Anger fled in shame
At the mention of thy name.
Selfishness, the sirc of each,
Hearing thou hadst come to teach,
Shod his feet and veiled his face,
Rushed in terror from the place.

“ Promise thou wilt stay awhile:
Yes, is answered in thy smile.
We will bring our choicest dishes,
Savored with our finest wishes;
Fruits and flowers of every season,
Juiced with wit and pulped with reason;
And each moment as it flies
Will seem sent from Paradise!

“ What are flowers, in vases rare,
If thy presence be not there?
Mirrors but a silver glare,
Brilliant gems a heavy care;
Rich attire and equipage,
Vulgar show and fortune’s gauge;
Art and music, sport and dance,
Cloy in turn, like dull romance;

Dainty viands, beggar's food ;—
Every gift and grace and good,
Empty vaunt and mockery,
If unblest, unshared by thee !

“Abide with us until the mind
Shall detest the lusts that blind ;
Till our being's roughest string
Catch thy spirit's vibrating ;
Till each instinct and emotion
Grow each moment more divine ;
And our fervor and devotion
Know the euphony of thine :
Then the thought shall be the deed
Fruited from thy planted seed.”

THE CYNIC.

THE world is a circle of wonders,
Yet its glory is ebbing away ;
Its muscles of granite contorted,
And chapped and punctured its skin of clay.

The sun and the moon and the countless sparks
Afloat in the pillarless blue,
Are voyagers o'er its fathomless deeps:
Not a home or a port in view.

Discontented, arrogant, selfish man,
Benumbed by a torrent of ills,
By the haughty caste of riches and blood,
By the grief that cankers and kills;

Ay, and dwarfed to the horrible practices
And mean desires of the beast;
Or comparing his projects with nature's
And his ever seeming the least!

Of the past the defiler, the waif
Of the present and future decades,
Still the sage, or the fool, or the slave,
Or the villain, whose end is the shades!

Who deplores if the masses perish,
So it help to the germing of one
Who shall garner for Science the secrets
Of stratum and vapor and sun?

Or if despot, radical, anarchist
Usurp Dominion's thrones and chairs,
Or the hard monopolist devise his schemes,
And bait his murderous snares?

So Cleon clamor for reform, and Commodus,
Wanton with crime and vice,
And Fortunatus quadruple his gains
And dwell in a zephyr of spice!

Or if barbarous War and his satellites
Consume and depopulate?
So our soulless Napoleon glut
His ambition and be miscalled the Great

Or if Famine, Disease, and Ignorance
Seize the pith of a thousand lives?
So Enterprise swell its treasuries,
And the royal line of Trade survives!

Or the mother loses her darling boy,
Or the father his sweetest flower?
So Luxury build her palaces,
And Revelry dance her giddy hour.

Who cares if woman denude her charms
In the temples of Thespian art,
Or if Fashion dethrone Truth, Affection,
And Trust from the sensitive heart?

So silk-robed Vanity, laced and gemmed,
Catch the stare of the envious throng
Or pampered Indolence urge the hour
By scented frolic and obscene song!

Who questions, I ask, if hoodwinked Innocence
Mimic lascivious attitudes?

So Parrhasius image, in voluptuous
Colors, a Helle's sensuous moods!

Or the heedless Fictionist invellum
His tale with a contagious curse,
Or the aimless Poet an Upas bloom
Sustains, in his garden of verse?

So Zola win false art's applause,
And Villon wear a perishable wreath;
While Juvenal, the Censor's avenging
Sword, lies corroding in its sheath!

Or the Preacher, the Merchant, Reformer
Cringe and haggle for gift and pree,
And insolent rogues solicit a God
For a share of a Paradise!

And the world's acclamations so hollow,
Like a vane that veers in a trice,
While our destinies turn to delight
Or despair by a toss of the dice!

So, whimsical man, why falter or fret,
If hungry Death be slow or fast?
Thy exquisite pleasures pall and rot,
Thy expectations are overcast!

Lo! he comes from his covert, with terrible
Clutch, to bear into the Void,
Our character, fame, and stainless possessions,—
Whatever was e'er enjoyed!

THE ENTHUSIAST.

I ACKNOWLEDGE the world is a mystical
Bulk, though a God was its Sire:
Yet the student has not 'prisioned
A throb of its chaotic heart of fire.

And this opulent, glorious earth of ours
Retains the beauty and grace
That was flashed on its countenance,
When God called it forth from the womb of space.

Yet the lover of Nature has noticed the habits
And given a name
To a few of its lovely creatures,
Though the humblest is worthy of fame.

And in Nature's huge demesne
There dwells an invisible spirit of good,—
A spirit of cheer and sympathy
That scents and spices our mental food.

And its green dappling coat

And bestudded hood are goodlier, grander things
Than when the Hun, and Goth, and Norseman
Were its brainless and barbarous kings.

And its forests and fruits, and birds and flowers,
Grow welcomer with the passing years,
As Freedom is dearer for dangers o'ercome,
And Love for its sighs and tears.

And the sense of the rose and the lily
That tenderly, constantly pleads
For the life of their delicate offspring,
For the life of the commonest weeds;

And the wondrous instinct of pity
In the bird, the insect, and the brute,
E'en the old garden-tree's heart
Bleeding for the loss of its earliest fruit.

We feel, when our deepest emotions
Are strung to a spiritual touch and tone,
The forest's love for the famished stream,
The moss's ruth for the riven stone.

And Man, the primitive, cosmic growth,
Supremest act of infinite love,
Superior to things elemental, an equal
To the noblest above!

Or Man cursed by the mental sluggishness
And ferocious lusts of the beast,
Or essaying his powers with angels,
And the angels seeming the least!

Or Man goaded on like a burdened horse,
Or a wreck on a barren shore;
Or the modeller of the past and the present,
And part of the evermore!

And when his fickle, finite heart
Despairs in its helplessness and its needs,
Crying blindly, dumbly, incessantly,
Is there one about us that heeds?

Though the response seem but an echo,
'Tis the voice of a heavenly Friend
Heard across the blackest abyss,—
"I am with thee even unto the end."

No Sinai lightnings confirm it,
No Delphic or Sibylline message is this;
Yet helpless Man with his grievance
Is consoled, as if by a mother's kiss!

And the light of a transfiguration
Cleaves the bars of his dungeoned soul,
Revealing Man's loftiest destiny
And Christ leading on to the goal!

And in this marvellous splendor
The beatitudes glow with a clearer light;
Irradiate more than the clustered gems
In the mystical ring of Night!

And showing the compassionate justice
And deathless patience of God,
Till this soul, in a rapture of pleasure,
Forgets it is held in a clod.

And he feels an absolute wisdom,
And a keener perception of things,
And in his hands the strongest of staffs
And a balm for the sharpest of stings.

Now words like jewels are flung from his lips,
And glints of hope from his eyes,
A heart of goodness susceptible
To the meekest of sorrowful cries.

Yes, to endure if Ignorance screw the rack,
Or light the martyr fires,
And ready to battle with tigers of hate,
Or suffer the crown of briers.

And the demons of want and pestilence,
The furies of error and strife,
Are quenched in this halo that proffers
To him the boon of a deathless life.

Now the future expands before him,
Like a summer sunburst in the east,
With the quintillions in communion,
Christ the ruler of the soulful feast!

Now the dynasties, republics, all are gone,—
Race and tribe, and class and clan
Are merged into the true Cosmopolite,
The perfect formed and minded Man!

Now love and wisdom, and justice and truth,
Philosophy, science, and art,
Only labor to aid the tireless mind
And to nurture the lustless heart.

He feels, when this fugitive world and its growths
Are riven from thought and space,
The good of the human exalted forever
Shall wear Jehovah's grace.

Not only his sovereign blessing be given,
But on through cycles of bliss,
With vaster powers at his command:
The seal of approval, God's kingly kiss!

POESY.

THOU true revealer of the beautiful !
Expression's lips are mute when thou art near ;
And if my lauding voice be cold and dull,
My mind and heart's recesses hold thee dear.
And as I look upon thee, twin with love,—
Thy guileless person robed in argent sheen,
Thy rose-gemmed bosom and enlaurelled brow,
Thy music-breathing lips and queenly mien,
My being is filled with earthless ecstasy ;
'Tis then my soul, exalted, feels that thou
Wast missioned, like Noah's olive-bearing dove,
To bring down peace and pleasure from above,
That they might dwell forever with the free.

Apollo's solace ! from thy natal day
Thou wast the priestess of a spirit shrine
Implored by all ; didst chieftain the array
Of sister muses with thy voice divine,
Whilst awe-hushed nations knelt in homage round.
And youthful earth, regarbed in brilliant hues,
Was silent till thy singing stirred her tongue,
Then all was animate : the twilight dews

Exhaled of tint and perfume for the flowers;
The forests, earth's heart-constant harpists, sung
Of shade and coolness to the vernal ground;
And nodding blossoms chorused, "We are crowned
To herald the approach of sunnier hours."

And Luna, guarded by her stellar ranks,
Didst whisper to the fountains and the streams,
"I'll light the jaggèd rocks and pebbled banks
That check your journeys by my brightest beams;
Retouch each wavelet with my silvery splendor,
As they urge on each other to the ocean."
Far from the water's bosom to the shore
Was heard each ripple's note of glad emotion,
Winged by brow-cooling breezes. And the leaves,
And blossoms, plants acquainted not before,
Stooped, touching lips in love, both warm and tender;
And each became the other's bold defender,
When ravished by the honey-seeking thieves.

Though nature homaged thy immortal being,
And flung its richest offerings at thy feet,
I fain wouldst look on thee, tho' scareely seeing,
And catch one smile to make my life more sweet;
Or rather let thy voice o'erbrim each part
With thine own music, then my frail-strung voice
Will amplify its tones, and as it sings
Will deem this favor its distinguished choice.

And if I shame thee, truth-invested nurse,
'Tis not that I refuse thy nurturings ;
But that this love, abounding in my heart,
Cannot conform its utterances to art ;
Yet owns thee empress of its universe !

THE POET AND HIS MOODS.

WHAT charm and skill the Poet hath !
He weaves a garland of life's saddest story,
And bends above its darkest, roughest path
A bow of hope and glory !

Sing, Poet, sing of beauty and of glory,
Of science with clear eyes for heavenlier seeing ;
Of knowledge truthward going, error fleeing ;
Of music and her brother, oratory ;
And blend life's tragedy with nature's story.
Thy lyre is still the fire-strings of our being—
The trumpet with the æolian tones agreeing.
So play, the world shall heed, tho' old and hoary.
And time, tho' rushing on, shall hear the playing,
And pluck the deathless pathos of the singing

To charm humanity,—a truant flying
From its protector, God; bewildered and a-straying
In a dark wilderness; no accents ringing
To woo it back, but His, or hush its crying.

Sing thou above the vender and the buyer,
The scorner, the betrayer, and the stinger;
The threat of bigot, and the shriek of brayer;
Some soul shall cull fresh hope and, mounting higher,
Will praise thy helpful song and bless the singer;
Some weakling heart shall cease to be a player
And wage the war on wrong with manly vigor.

Some hand spurn sword and, gun and, wisely eager,
Grasp pen or plough or wield the axe and hammer;
Some tongue choose Christian speech for vulgar
clamor,
The music of the books for ignorance's stammer.

Man, choose the mien of truth for folly's glamour
Grow agile-limbed, despite of habit's rigor.

Let love for the human pervade thy strain;
All else may pass, thy epic must remain.

THE POET'S TRIUMPH.

'Tis the Poet's hour of triumph—
Sunbeam garlands ring his brows;
Summer bears his lyre and mantle,
Rambling under leafful boughs.

Saying, "Minstrel, I adore thee,
I would linger where thou art:—
For thy music thrills my senses,
Stirs my blood and claims my heart.

"Choose me for thy sole companion,—
I, the maiden from the South,
Promise to esteem and serve you:
Seal your assent on my mouth."

Then Love gently interposes:
"I have cheered him thro' the years;
Balmed and healed his keenest sorrow,
Raised his hopes and stilled his fears.

"Wouldst thou be an interloper,
With thy soft and amorous wiles,
Livelier youth and gayer beauty,
Brighter eyes and warmer smiles?

“Or dost seek to separate us?
Or what vengeance wouldst thou wreak?”
Then her tender pathos faltered,
And the tear-drops marked her cheek.

Then the Poet kindly wooed her:
“Thou hast been my guide and friend:
I am pledged to thee forever,
Wheresoe'er thy footsteps tend.

“Let this maiden tarry with us,
For her pilgrimage is brief;
Though she wear a crown of roses,
Thine is of the sereless leaf.

“And her robe of filmy texture,
Woven by the sisters three,
Frail at best, will lose its lustre:
Thine is for eternity.”

Then they sauntered on together,—
Love as glad as sunny June:
Summer singing, Poet striving
To repeat the matchless tune!

W H I T T I E R.

ONE of the builders of Truth's edifice,
Unconsciously thy thought and act have bound
The bays with which thy stainless brows are
crowned.

Now rest thy form: thou hast not toiled amiss!
But wrought to lighten Slavery's black abyss,
While blinded thousands hissed, and scorned, and
laughed,—
Revealing then a matchless handicraft
To find at last a heritage of bliss.

The kindnesses of friends to aid and bless thee,
Who honor thy superior workmanship
With praises that outward the fiery lip;
The arms of art and nature to caress thee;
And, dearer, voices of a spirit band,
Who bend to hear thy pinnace grate the sand.

I see the house of honor thou hast built:
A fane, where godlike men could kneel and pray,
And feel the grandeur of a newer day;
And evil-doers spurn the lures of guilt.

A structure graced with wisdom's imageries,
Clothed on with holy beauty; gem-like hopes,
Set in imagination's golden tropes,
More valuable than pearls of Persian seas!

And virtue's rich mosaics spread before thee,
A dome of love, like Heaven, arching o'er thee,
For sure protection; walls of faith, so strong
That flesh and spirit are more strongly willed
To bear, unmoved and calm, the blows of wrong;
A house which time or death could never build!
Mayst thou and age together sweetly live,
Like fond, heart-bound companions sorrow freed;
And we who linger near its entrance read:
"Who enters here thy brother's sins forgive!"

LONGFELLOW.

A TRUANT from Life's school, I found myself,
One summer day, at Poesy's perfect inn;
And saw a guest, unhurt by fault or sin,
Who postured not to power, or place, or pelf;
Whose life was sweet and redolent as June's;
Whose catholic heart embraced the world as kin
And as he came, his glances smote the din,
And changed the harshest discords into tunes.

And then I quaffed a beaker to his fame,—
A rain-filled lily was my cup and wine,—
And prest my heartiest blessing in his hand,
And said, “Grand Poet! worthy of the name
Nature has given thee, at Love’s command,
Allow my feet to mark the tracks of thine;
And if I cannot wholly feel thy thought,
At least I may applaud that thou hast wrought!”

K E A T S.

NEGLECTED Keats, thou youthful prince of song!
A Pan and Ceres were thy king and queen;
And thou didst ride, from classic scene to scene,
In Fancy’s noiseless chariot, swift and strong.
And I, thy changeless lover, from the throng
Wouldst follow where thy pilgrim feet have been;
And catch a view of thy poetic mien,
And hear thy matchless lyre its notes prolong.

I fain wouldst honor thy melodious verse
With words of praise, but eloquence is mute;
And sorrow melts the heart and pales the cheek,
Before the spectre of the cold, deaf curse
That struck thee down; though giving us the fruit
That, since thy death, the years pronounce unique!

BYRON.

THE Poet brought a doleful air,
And as the tear-drops wet the strings,
It turned its subtle vibrations
To one long octave of despair!

What blow of fate had bowed his head?
Had all his kindred proved untrue?
Ah! Love, his playmate, waved adieu,
And Hope, his sometime guest, was dead

SHELLEY.

GREAT bard, and true disciple of the Muse!
A helpful heart was thine for others' pains;
And so, indelible to Mammon's stains,
To love an ingrate world couldst only choose!
Bold troubadour, fed with Castalian dews,
The certain charm and sweetness of thy strains,
Exquisite, are transfigured and remains
Attired in nature's and expression's hues.

And though thy mind didst err, we love and laud
The subtle cadence of each vibrant chord,
Transmitted to the beauty of thy verse:

The trumpet tones in scorn of tyrants' rods;
The duleet airs in praise of Morning's bird,
The sweetest elegy man ever heard;—

All that thou musicked forth of men or gods
Seems incarnated; though the shroud and hearse

Were not thy portion, thy wave-smothered breath
Still sweeps and echoes through the halls of Death!
And though thy slender frame was quenched by fire,
The soul inspired by love from earliest youth
Is known and honored by the laurelled choir
Who lay their trophies at the feet of Truth;
Thy richest gift was song, and in the heart
We feel its genius, smoothed and schooled by Art.

B R Y A N T.

UNFATHOMED Nature's Artist, when I ponder
On thy true pictures, my heart swells with pride;
Applausive too, that thou hast been a guide
Of her demesne, discerning some new wonder
With every distance plodded by her side;

Some fresh, sweet thing that made our homage
fonder;

Perchance, in forest depths or on the tide;
Or sung in softest notes or tones of thunder.

Staid poet, while thy singing charms the ear,
And calms the agitations of the heart,

I fain would question thee. Say, didst thou learn
These secrets from the seasons' fair return,
And deftly weave them in thy rhymes by art?
Or didst thou breathe a purer atmosphere,
Where sense and soul do nothing but aspire,
And rise above the lowlands of desire?

For thou didst reach the summits most sublime
Of truth and wisdom, only yielding up
Thy length of thought-ripe years, to take the cup
And don the garments of perpetual prime!

Accept a nation's praise, white-handed bard
(Whose impeccable spirit still invites
With smiles and gestures to the heavenly heights):
The best we give to thee is evil-starred!

NATURE'S ROOM.

'Tis sweet to roam through Nature's gorgeous room,
Where green-paved stairways, fit for angel feet,
Lead near the tasselled corn or yellowed wheat;
Or fairer, winding through sweet views of bloom,
Of groups, all glistening color and perfume,
Which nod a welcome to each verdured seat;
Where sunshine and the zephyr seem too fleet,
And coolness glides through aisles of foliaged gloom.

Where Sculpture's trophies are the lofty woods,
And Painting's gems the flowers; and Music's moods
Are pictured in the thrush or robin's hymn
That fills this latticed, shifting roof of green.
And fountains, too, are here: each bubbling spring
Seems quite their equal in its flowing joy,
Purling, as if the day would ne'er grow dim,
Nor earth-bound children quit the cordial scene,
Where light and beauty dash, and gleam, and swing,
And Opulence dilates without alloy!

A peerless room, untouched by age or art,
And built transcendently, ere art was born;
Whose vast magnificence we see in part,
Whose doors and windows are the night and morn.

THE SUN AND SEA AND EARTH.

O Sun, Prometheus like, I fain would steal
The bursts of warmth thy systems feel ;
But, I the phantasy, thy splendors real,
Like magnet to the steel !

O often dappling Sea, I would portray
The boundless reaches of your sway,—
A Hercules when angered ; in thy play,
We kiss thy harmless spray !

And thou, space-girdled Earth, I would declare
Thy quintessences that we share ;
Thy miracles of life spread everywhere,
Thy sounds beyond compare !

Golden Sun, sapphire Sea, and emerald Earth,
Triumvirs of patrician birth !
I fain would be a flower at your girth,
A wavelet of your mirth,
A beamlet of your worth !

THE APPROACHING DAY.

AFAR, the faintest crimson streaks the east,
Auspicious herald of the God of day,
As night, enrobed in shadows, glides away,
And leaves uncovered nature's sateless feast.
Ah! from earth's proudest creature to the least,
The stream and lake and ocean's foamy play;
The tree and plant and flower's rich array;
The feathered songster and recumbent beast,—
All wait his coming with expectant eyes.
Behold! the red is grown a wavy flood
Of color, mixed with clouds of mottled dyes!
And he, led by the Seraphim of good,
Ascendeth step by step the azure skies,
Crowned Ruler of the starry brotherhood!
Advancing, till his beauty hurts the sight,
And all the world is drenched in dazzling light.

A PEERLESS MORNING.

THE Morn, in new attire of Sol's device,
Flings health and gladness from her lap, and stops
To greet the darkest pool and roughest copse:
A Morn soliciting the deeds of Love,
Like that which Milton dreamed and musicked of,
Was Eve's, ere she had lost a Paradise!

A Morn, presageful of a cloudless day,—
Green-belted, azure-capped, and golden-haired,
Like that which Shelley saw from Spezia's bay,
Or Byron from Lake Leman's wooded banks;
So sweet we slip our cares and render thanks,
And deem the earth more worthy to be trod:
We share the feeling sage-like Coleridge shared,
When his rapt soul was fed with ecstasy;
When, gazing on Mont Blanc from Chamouni,
He heard earth's thousand voices praising God.

TO-MORROW.

DIE, lurid day, so that to-morrow's sun
May chariot forth, in pomp, a lustrous day,
Whose hours of mirth and joy will seem as one,
Clad in the richest things of earth's display.

A day, indeed, of nature's grand revealing,
When her sweet face is flushed with tender looks,
And the pleased heart, so full of praiseful feeling,
Hears music from the secret caves and nooks.

A day redundant with its fruits and flowers,
Of Ceres 'mid her fields a sylvan queen;
And Pan a monarch guarding his great flocks;
When birds sing gladlier from their leafy towers,
And waters purl more gently 'gainst the rocks,
And lawns and meadows show their glossiest green.

A day when all the senses feel the scene,
And every sound, and shape, and odor pleases,
Warmed by the light, and swept by healthy breezes,
With grove of tasselled chestnuts stretched between.
A day whose gracious close would bring release
To an outworned brain,—a Sabbath span of Peace.

AN APRIL RAIN.

THE storm, whose vans of vapor screen the sun,
Speeds on in anger and southwestward steers,
Like an Attila ravenous for spoil,
And hales the day a captive in his train,
All cuffed and pelted by the wind and rain,
Defeatured ; only here and there a print
Of April's feet, and those of sombre tint ;
Yet, the green-coated guardians of the soil
Defend her form, and with uplifted spears
And dauntless front and file, that seem as one,
Repulse and stay the baleful storm's advances,
And splintering into spray his million lances.

The storm is vanquished, and the setting light
Defines a semicircle in the west,
Between red-margined isles of purple cloud,
That catch its farewell look ; the robins sing
The glad arrival of delaying Spring,
Whose warblings fix her timid heart at ease ;
They call her to their palace in the trees
Of fruitage blossoms, and the which are bowed

By lulling airs, to sweep her head and breast
On either side, alternate pink and white.
And large nature bequeaths her wide demesne,
As her tribute gift, to the young, fair queen.

THE SUN.

BEST simile of God's unsullied throne!

From thee was caught the fire of starry states;
Flash of his sceptre's flame that came alone
Through a slight crevice of the pearly gates,
And witnessed the conception, and the birth,
Of every dumb and voiceful form of earth!

Thou prelude of creation! dost thou miss
One of the starry creatures round thee hurled?
Or urge their motions through the vast abyss,
As thou dost draw the vapors of our world?
Oh! build thy bridge of weightless spans and piers,
That Time may carry o'er its load of years!

Thou stellar Abdiel! whose quenchless fire
Replenishes the flame of evening's lamp,
Disperse the vapors charged with blight, nor tire,
But smite to death the loathsome mist and damp;
The unseen pestilence that walks the air,
To add new sorrows to our life of care.

Discerner of the present and the past!

Illumine still the ether with thy blaze;
As thou wast first, so shalt thou be the last
By God extinguished; thy pellucid rays
Shall vanish only when this disk of green,
Grown palsied, yieldeth to a grander scene!

Unwearied patriarch, how true thou art!

Neglecting not the smallest blade or leaf;
But, like the kindness of a loyal heart,
Diffusing thy still cordial of relief
E'en when the struggles of an inward storm
Are visible upon thy stately form.

Thou distant marvel of God's workmanship!

When gazing on thy face, a sudden thrill
Darts to the heart, and languages the lip
To swell thy worth; the heart to love thee still.
O bless earth's charms and creatures, and our home,
And warm to life the bounties yet to come!

THE SUN AND SEA.

THE Sun, like a freed cageling, cleaves earth's cover,
And greets the Ocean with its virgin kiss;
Yes, dallying and wooing like a lover,
Flushed to the brows with bliss!

Belovèd Ocean! is thy bosom cold
From long exposure to the glooms of night?
Or didst Storm's fitful bluster make thee bold
To motion thy delight?

Perhaps the gem-eyed Arabs of the sky
Surveyed the varying aspects of thy face;
Or the late-coming Moon, more cold and shy,
Haloed each wind-blown grace?

Perchance she blanched the pallor of the wave
To warn it of its near approach to death;
That only sand would be its wreathless grave,
And stop its elamorous breath!

And Ocean answers: "Lord of fiery globes,—
Whose single glanee illumines the misty earth,—
I love to view thee part thy vapory robes,
And feel thee clasp my girth.

"I love thy constant warmth and dazzling splendor,
Now shown in countless smiles upon my breast:
I fain would grow like thee, both true and tender,
And be at peace and rest.

"Ah! 'tis my fate to wander unsubdued,'
To struggle, vainly, like old Laocoön;
Whilst thou dost look and act in calmest mood,
And earth string summer's tune."

A NIGHT, SCENE.

How beautiful this night! the rounded moon,
Like a fond mother, guards the sleeping world:
The storm that threatened war, at sultry noon,
Is passed, with all its cloudy banners furled.
And left o'erhead a hollow amethyst—
From the horizon to the zenith's height—
Encrusted thick with brilliant gems instead;
And earth, the bloodless victor, bares her head
To don the meed, like some Crusader knight,
Crowned by his choice as champion in the list,
And wears it as a sign of her release
From strife and turmoil,—the grandest meed of
Peace!

SPRING.

DESPITE salutes of snowy whirl,
The dying scoff of March the churl,
Shy April, with all courtesy,
Steps in and says, "Good-day, good health,"
To each expectant votary
Within Spring's widening commonwealth!

“And more, what harmless luck is yours,
Since sunshine’s countless coin endures!

And who but he would reimburse
(As if the rates were usurers’)

The taxes borrowed from your purse!
Rejoice, Spring’s ardent worshippers,

For Winter’s rude phalanx has struck.”
I answer, having heard the frog,
White-smockèd, chuckle from the bog;

The piping toad, and warning cluck,
Long silent, of the mother fowl;
And having braved the tempest’s scowl,
To read the leaf’s red-purpled sign
Of folded green on tree and vine.

“Ah, April, I forecasted this,
Ere I had felt your clasp and kiss,
Ere I had seen your gracile shape
Behind the storm’s black-broidered cape;
Ere Sol’s regalia decked your breast
And showed your face the goodliest

That ever dared the season’s frown;
For on the slope, a few days since,
An emerald glimmering was traced,

Between the withered tufts of brown,
By some good forester or prince
Of comely port, your suitor, passed

And dropped this fadeless lure to win you,
Or as a guide to spring's retinue;

Ay, ere this sign is rightly known,
Or you have soothed our long suspense,
A cavalcade will here be shown
Of tropical magnificence,—
A host with banners and with song,
To cheer us on while days grow long.

“Come, April, seek my lonely tent
And bid me be your confident;
And pour those secrets in my ear
That soon your sister May shall hear;
Yes, speak the language lovers speak,
When fervor glows from eye and cheek;
And having only brought good news,
How sweet shall be our interviews!

“I'll learn whether your magic rod
Possess the virtue Aaron's had;
Could bring such plumage to the sod
And make the tit and bluebird glad;
Or could bring down, thro' rain and mist,
The heaven's flawless amethyst,
And give it to the violet;
Or gather, like Saint Peter's net,

All colors from the bow, to make
A nosegay for your sister's sake;
Or put your very life in pawn
To buy for earth the tints of morn;

“ Come, April, sit you down and chat;
And I will garner every thought
Of waxing nature's this and that,
And hint of power that can transmute
The sodden soil to gold of fruit;
The inner veil shall part in twain,
And all the secrets be made plain
Of bursting bud and spreading shoot,
And their outgrowth from bulb and root;
And while the flyers mount and sing,
Allow the flowers you have brought
To date the calendar of Spring!”

Within the meadow's tangles, tricked in snow,
I caught a sudden glimpse of Spring's return:
The clues, the clover leaf, the grass, and fern,—
These show their vigor ere the violets blow,
Or woodland's mingled sweets pass to and fro;
And spike-like dandelions 'front the cold,
And waxen buttercups, and both of gold,—
These plainly mark the foot-paths we should go.

I know my heart, like children with a toy,
Will throb most swift to see the pansies bloom,
To squeeze the shrubs and suck their keen perfume;
But what is equal to the bounding joy
We feel, when first we hear the robin's trill,
Or hear the trickling rill or bluebird sing?
Or pull the first wild-flower, knowing that Spring
Has greened our favorite seat on bank and hill?

SPRING.

MARCH, the vandal, is slain in the final charge;
For Spring embarks in her royal barge,

And the laughing crew,
In voluble pairs
(A safe excursion be theirs),
Oar away through the opulent blue;
Glad to abandon the quay of dawn;
Spring, in her beauty and youth
And exquisite robes
(Unbought in vanity's booth),
Outlining her body's shape:
The turn of limbs to her bosom's moleless globes
Swelling to escape;

Spring, with a mantle of greenness on,
And woven of every shade,
With apple and cherry blossoms overlaid ;
And sprays of lilacs for bows,
And Guelder-roses for furbelows ;
And cowslips running a yellow hem ;
And mottled pansies for clasps ;
And proud in carriage, and winsome of face
(Like Diana drest and capped for chase),
A bunch of roses she deftly grasps
And shakes the aroma over them ;
Extravagant gift !
Now across and over the gossamer drift
They lazily slip ;
Or through the golden billowy glow
Steadily, quietly row.
A glorious trip !

Each rower, watching the helmsman's moves,
Anticipating the old command,
To reverse and bend towards the land
Heaving in view ; this but only proves
An omen to her heart of the moment's birth,
When her head shall rest on the shoulder of earth,
And feel the passionate clasp of his, . . .
Like Paolo's lips, Francesca's direful kiss !

“Bend to, my oarmen, and swiftly move,
I fain his strenuous love would prove;
I feel the welcome awaiting us,
This very wind is a stimulus!

Ah, the royal banquet is set for all,
A sweet repast from the golden age,
With odors for meat, and song for beverage,
And waters singing, and birds a-trilling,
And handsome Ceres, benign and willing,
To head or follow the festival!”

TO SPRING.

HASTEN, Spring, and thatch the roof
That Winter pilfered,—Arctic thief!
With every hue and cut of leaf,
And weave it trebly weather proof.

Toil on till every gap is filled,
That kine may come to rest and browse;
The crickets chirp, the bees carouse,
The yellow-jacks reswarm and build!

And early birds remate and nest,
And sing and leap, and idly preen ;
In contrast to the large leaf's green,
The robin show its scarlet vest.

And, while you work, I'll lightly doze
And dream that April softly breathes
Of violets ; that June enwreaths
The lilac, pansy, and the rose ;

Or July, tired of heaping sheaves,
Fevered and thirsty, seeks its shade ;
While southern zephyrs, half afraid,
Twirl whiffs of solace thro' the leaves.

Or Autumn comes, wrapt in a mist,
And sprinkles a light down of rime :
The late flowers shrivel in their prime,
The woodland's green cannot resist,

But shrinks to orange, pink, and red ;
A sweeping robe of gorgeous tints
That, with this show of color, hints
To lovers' eyes it is not dead !

But soon the rich sap of its veins
Is quenched, its beauty paled and gone ;
And Winter's Juggernaut drives on,
With bleak December at the reins !

Hasten, Spring, and clothe the oak,
The maple, sycamore, and pine;
For you are sent by Powers divine,
And may this be your master-stroke!

M A R C H.

VICTORIOUS March annuls the war
That Winter waged thro' light and gloom;
And he, who rivalled fabled Thor,
Grizzled and stooped, awaits his doom!

The down like robes and holly wreath
Wrap not his chilling form and brow;
The pointless spear and sword in sheath
Are laid aside and useless now!

And, when the dull and plumeless hearse
Shall bear him to the flowerless tomb,
Wild March shall chant a praiseful verse,
Infused with scents of coming bloom.

And he who won the bloodless field,
And freed his ice-chained prisoners,
Should wear the violet on his shield,
The bluebirds be his couriers!

M A R C H.

THE morning came, arrayed in rosy splendor,
Her ruddy face a metaphor of mirth,
Gazing below with glances swift and tender,
As if to warm the countenance of earth;
And by her side the sylph-like form of Spring
Seemed marshalling her crowd of votaries,—
The sprightly birds, the buds, and opening flowers;
 The water's murmuring
Of gladness 'neath the early-sprouting trees,
And shoots of grass that told of Sol's great powers.

Another morning came, and lo, the change:
Concealed her crimson cheeks and lustrous eyes!
Snow-builded stretches fill the vision's range,
And hush, to scarce-heard lispings, nature's cries.
The wrathful blast, too, urges on the storm,
Like Orestes, the fated charioteer,
With reckless movement through the sunless arch;
 And that angelic form
I thought so fair and meek, doth now appear,
The graceless figure of capricious March!

M A Y.

BUD-LADEN May, the queen of flowers,
Spring's dearest child, is with us now,
Though hidden by gray skies and showers
She comes with beauty on her brow,
Borne by the golden-harnessed hours.

And as her figure passes by;
The fruit-trees pelt her on the crown
With gorgeous blossoms; robins fly
Around and sing of her renown,
And imitate her sweet reply.

The blading grasses kiss her feet;
The plants stoop down to touch her form
The young leaves and the branches meet
Above her head; the sunbeams warm,
And perfumes float about her seat.

Where'er she goes, by vale or stream,
She is a presence of delight,—
A nymph that lives on air and beam,
And walks this earth to make it bright,
Like visions of a pleasant dream.

M A Y - T I M E.

Oh, the May-time, youthful May-time!
Coming like a maiden true,
Paint our senses with thy beauty;
Every scent and sound and hue.

Richest blossoms of the orchard,
Sweetest warble of the bird,
Fairest flowers of lawn and garden,
And the grasses' greenest word.

Softest gush of limpid crystal,
Finest leaf that e'er was spun,
Grace of hill and bloom of valley,
Haloed by the setting sun.

Oh, the May-time, gentle May-time!
Give to us thy tranquil will,
That the passions may be governed,
And the heart be firm and still.

Oh, the May-time, jocund May-time!
Grant to us thy harmless joy,
That the mind may seek thy secrets,
And accept a new employ.

J U N E.

KIND charioteer of summer weather,
Restore the beauty May concealed ;
That my sweet love and I, together,
May traverse the wood and field.

Retint with deeper hues the flowers ;
Increase the forest's mint of leaves ;—
And these will be our only bowers,
At sunlit noons or moonlit eves.

And carpet deep the teeming ground
With grasses of the darkest green ;
Each hill and vale and plantless mound,
With tangled, beaded vines between.

Where'er we go, by river bank,
Or hidden glen, or shadowy glade,
Bring forth some creature of thy rank
To ply the charm of light and shade !

Conceal us by thy leafy armor,
As we caress and press our lips ;
And then we'll call thee holy charmer,
Whose arts shall never feel eclipse !

A DAY IN JUNE.

THE soul forgets its daily guise,
Of pains and aches, and groans and sighs,
And views strange things with altered eyes.

The concord of the summer sky,
Descending, stills earth's shrillest cry.
It cannot language a reply.

A calm, so sweet, is spread around,
It charms the singer's softest sound,
And names the flat sward, holy ground.

The richness of the vaulted blue
Enhances earth's most sombre hue,
So pure, that God seems smiling through!

Earth lies supine, and notes its hints,
An album for my greenest prints,
While ocean steals its darkest tints.

And nature seems as if in swoon,
As morning turns to dazzling noon
Beneath the tread of Sol's gold shoon.

Then afternoon glides out of sight
As swiftly as the swallow's flight,
And evening comes to herald night.

And night walks on the azure porch,
And holds aloft her silver torch,
Whose rays shall neither blind nor scorch!

THE DOUBLE MIRROR.

I WATCHED the flawless mirror of the pool
Reflecting clear each object flitting by:—
The flight of bird, the clouds, the patch of sky,
And tree-tops shaken by the breezes cool.
And thought, although a pupil of this school,
The glass of life reflects its beauties too:
Each aspiration's startling tone and hue,
Each look and touch, unharmed by passion's rule.

Yes, clearer than the water's image, thought
And fancy, noble impulse and desire,
Are glassed, not only in their faint outline,
But bodily, heated by the spirit's fire;
As if they were companions most divine,
By some mysterious power or wisdom wrought.

HINTS BY THE WAY.

WHEN weary of the burning street,—
Its forms, and shows, and jostling feet,
The rustlings of a single tree
Seem then the grandest minstrelsy ;
Its tasselled tops and leafy shade
More dear than domes that man has made ;
Its gnarled branches, which we grasp,
More friendly than a human clasp ;
Bending over us in its love,
With noise below and peace above.
And we would dream, beneath its arms,
Of grand old woods and summer's charms.

The wild grass at the pavement's edge
Seems then an orphan of the meadow,—
Torn from its brother of the hedge
To prosper here in dust and shadow ;
Without one flower to soothe its life,
Or murmuring creek to chide the strife ;
Ay,—blading near the rough-hewn stone,
As if it wished to be alone ;

Now darting its slim spears of green,
Like sentinels of some sylvan scene,
Where birds and bees, and fields and streams,
Unite to sway the poet's dreams.
And yet this tree, which guards the pave,
Will watch its growth and mark its grave;
And while its branches sway and toss,
Some cricket will endirge its loss.

A DOWN-TRODDEN FLOWER.

YES, an outcast from the garden,
Flung beneath the human crush,
There to perish in the turmoil,
There to lose its scent and blush.

Once its petals might have cherished
Softest pressure of the lips,
Undulations of the bosom,
Touches of white finger-tips.

Or a girl's breath might have fanned it
With a zephyr ever new,
Brightest smiles for morning sunbeams,
Secret tears for twilight dew!

Or, more sweet, its lustrous color
Might have lit the sufferer's room,
Filling all the dark, lone places
With a soothing, soft perfume.

Ah! 'twas fated not to be a
Lover's charge or beauty's guest,
But to lie a waif neglected,
In the mire to find its rest.

'Tis the same with our existence:
Some find treasures rich and fair;
Others plod life's bustling highway,
Crushed at last by heels of Care!

OUR GARDEN.

OUR garden shuns the thoroughfare:
A small, square plat of earth,
Reft of exotics, rich and rare,
And palms of tropic birth;
But simple flowers bloom gladly there,
And lithograph their worth,
And plants of such low pedigree,
The wild grass seeks their company.

'Tis not enclosed with stone and glass,
Nor graced with nymphs in stone;
Nor fountains play upon the grass;
But pansies newly blown,
Velvety soft, and in a mass,
Reveal an art their own;
The roses too, their comrades fair,—
The sweetest births of sun and air!

The giant sunflower is its warden:
Armed with its shield of seeds,
Which larger grows; yet nodding pardon
To each trespasser's deeds.
More strange, the perfumer of the garden,
The tuberose, still feeds
Its incense, bares its ivory skin,
To its less fair and fragrant kin.

And here th' violet finds a corner,
To spy, with eyes so blue,
That it is no wonder the great Adorner
Painted Heaven the same hue!
Nor that it grieves the dolt and scorner
To see it wave adieu;
Yet, strange, the morning-glory's bell
Peals to the lilies, "All is well."

The thick geraniums fix their claims
In scarlet rows for hedge;
The sleek verbenas, in their aims
To keep their early pledge,
Press forward all their freshest flames,
And reach beyond its edge;
And e'en the heliotrope upbears,
To blend its milder hues with theirs.

Sun-favored things, whose bells are pealing
For worship at your shrines,
Whose silky petals are revealing
Perfection of designs,
Whose thrilling odors come a-stealing,
While now our garden shines,
Be ever the emblems of the pure,—
The richest virtu of the poor !

THE WOODLAND'S CHARMS.

AFTER the sudden summer gust,
What cool, fresh, precious smells
That haunted and ambushed themselves
In hollows, fields, and dells,
Entrance the senses, like the elves
Do by their subtle spells !

And tho' the storm, like an Amazon,
Had rushed on unawares,
And rent and tossed their leafy tents,
Yet these mute, sightless airs
Had drawn from her their keenest scents,
And baffled all her snares!

And when these vestal visitors,
That would not pass me by,
Had lulled the fevered flesh and blood,
And silenced whim and sigh,—
Like April soothes a drooping bud,
I said, you must not die,

For in my heart I found a lodge
Of lacèd phantasies,
Shot thro' with fancy's rays and gleams
Of antique melodies,
And arras wrought with lovers' dreams
And poets' reveries.

And this shall house your sweetness in
From autumn's windy raids,
And winter's flings of snow and ice;
And when my palace fades,
Flora shall fill the air with spice,
And deck the leaf arcades.

Or Summer, deeming you were lost,
Shall wave her green ensign
Above a rose-topped garden, masked
By many a bush and vine,
And search and plead, where you have basked,
"Return, fond forms, be mine."

THE AUTUMN WIND.

ALL day the wilful wind has sped,
Like rough Mazeppa's fear-spurred, reinless steed,
As if the skies were but a span,
Or its sheer spaces were too limited
To show its gracefulness and speed,
And test its lusty limbs.
(The wind, too, has its rashful whims,
Like frenzied man !)
But now it halts and breathes with even breath
And whinnies for its pitiless master,—
The black-browed Storm.
And see! he comes, and mounts its tameless form
(Now for warfare and disaster),
And gallops on to death!

AFTER THE STORM.

THE sky is trooped with clouds,
And, close between
Itself and earth, the storm
Is heard and seen
To scatter from its form
A riper green

On bud, and blade, and leaf;
The shaggy pine
Is tipped with emerald fire;
And every vine
Boasts of a new attire,
And laughs at mine!

And tho' the storm is gone,
It would not balk
The longing of the root
Or leafless stalk;
But promised growth and fruit.
And down the walk

What range of colors glow—
From which to choose!
The lilacs' purpling sprays;
The pansies' blues;
And thick geraniums' maze
Of scarlet hues!

The roses' pinks and whites
Would you select?
Or lilies' creamy bowls,
All golden flecked?
And quaffed by happy souls
And bards, elect!

And over all the shrubs
And woodbine spill
Their honeyed redolence;
And from the rill
Up to the bush-hid fence,
It flutters still!

J U L Y.

I YEARN for the proud almoner, July,
To enter and redeem her scented pledges,
Whispered beside the bloomless lilac hedges,
Where cricket's chirp and locust's crinkled cry
Forewarned her advent, like a stealthy spy;
But lo, she comes down thro' my thrifty garden,
With smiles and glances that implore a pardon
For tardiness,—the which could we deny?

Stay, Gardener, and use thy wizard power!
Uplift with beauty's gifts spare want and use,
Transmute the rain, and dew, and sun, and breeze
Into new deeper hues for grass and flower;
And for the peach, plum, pear, and apple trees
Rare tints and palatable meat and juice;
And for the grape and melon the same spice
Our father Adam sipped in Paradise.

AUTUMN.

'TIS sad, we say, that these fine scenes should pass,
This splendid spectacle of earth and sky
Should fade like fabrics from a human die!
The flowers and flowering weeds and seeded grass,
The earnest gossips of the flagged morass,
The birds' shrill pipe, and insects' shriller tick,
Enlivening the tree, or bush, or rick,
Should pass beyond our sighs, and heart's alas!

Wave, Golden-Rod, thy scentless saffron plumes
In token of our sorrow and regret;
And in a spirit urn our favorite blooms
And essences that cold can never fret:
Yea, all of earth that wooed the eyes and ears
Shall claim the homage of our loving tears!

September vanquished, followed by a crowd
Of malcontents to make the heart complain.
Summer was dead and plucked her fat domain,
With bare enough of flowers for pall and shroud;

The sky was crammed with many a brazen cloud,
Impatient to volley its swirls of rain;
And winds, once soft, now blew in wild disdain
Of nature's beaten army, stripped and cowed,

And lorn October, steadfast to the last,
Her kingdom rent, her garments drenched and sere,
With an imperious temper, like crazed Lear,
Defies the leaf-flecked tumult of the blast,
And gathers all the fruitage ere 'tis lost,
Despite the cuffs of snow and goads of frost!

A CANARY.

OH, yellow-mantled, alien bird!
With thy rich vein of trills,
Oh, soother of my cares and ills,
I yearn for one sweet word,
Or fine melodious phrase,
To voice my praise!

I see thee blithely swinging
In a narrow cell of wire
(An exile worthy of a tear);
Yet madly, gladly singing,

As if thou wert upon a tree:
Thy raptures told or set to melody.
Sing, bird without a peer,
And know thy rank,—the master of the choir!

Stay! listen to his jocund song:
What a ripple of notes
Is poured from the sleekest of throats,
So sweet and strong!
Like a runnel's limpid sparkle and gush,
His gladness is confest;
And now as sudden a hush,
And settled wings and beating breast,
And brilliant peering eyes,
Attest surprise
At his own faultless bursts of joy,
And skyey range,
Like baby with a fresh-brought toy,
Halted between delight and fright because 'tis strange.

THE HELIOTROPE.

O wannish purpling Heliotrope,
For whom
Upon this greening slope
Is hoarded all this bland perfume?

There is no streamlet coursing near
To claim its healthy lisp of cheer;
Nor prickly bush nor knotty tree
Dare say its sweetness is for me;
And th' hurly-burly of the breeze,
Like Peter's saviour, only frees
Its fine, elusive, quiekening powers,
To lull the pangs of scentless flowers.

It seems to me the essence fine
Of May's delicious, harmless wine;
Now freely, kindly, wholly spent
For Flora's blessed sacrament.
And while I drink its odors rare,
I ask what message it may bear.

Its answer is a heavenly plea
Against the world's idolatry:

The worship of the golden calf.

It is rebuke, in modest guise,
That spikes the sceptic's batteries,

And flings its banner from his staff.

It is an answered, hallowed prayer,
That Man shall crush the imp Despair;
That tho' his ideals mount the sky
Shall know fulfilment by and by!

O amethystine Heliotrope,
Thy stars divulge a horoscope
More precious to our ardencies
Than e'er was scanned by Seni's eyes;
Thy perfume is to conscious things
More sweet than Ponce's mythic springs!

A SEA-SIDE VIEW.

FOR days the sea had shown a gradual swell,
Its health and bearing equable and meek,
And kind its greeting; when a savage freak
Of northeast temper clipt the seeming spell

And spurred its calmness to a very hell
Of fiercest rage, that, human-like, would wreak
Rash vengeance on the innocent and weak,
And show a havoc beyond parallel!

Its mellow voice becomes a thunderous roar;
Its immense arms and fists, omnipotent
As storied Typhon's, are lifted to strike
Its nearest victim; yea, to scoop the shore
In mammoth hollows; and the impediment
Of masonry, or bluff, or reef, or dyke
But wider makes this white-maned Centaur's path,
And desolation chuckles o'er his wrath!

AFTER THE RAIN.

AFTER the rain, when sunshine feeds
The youthful flock of April's see,—
The nurslings of the brakes and banks,—
A puff of praise, a lisp of thanks,
Will pass from every bush and tree,
Led by the robin's melody;
The flowers, with all their freaks and pranks,
Above the nodding clover ranks,

Will ring their bells in fealty.
The grasses tell their crystal beads
Beside the thankless gypsy weeds,
For worship's priceless offering.

Mute censors of our wrangling creeds,
We need your just admonishing;
And hope your winning unison,
So audible now, may give us grace
To press forward till the goal is won;
And trust that on our altar-place
The high resolve and pure desire
May burn like tulip's heart of fire!

THE RIFLED GARDEN.

THE garden has lost its vivid colors and redolent
tone,
And I seek my summer fellows, but I saunter on
alone.

Where the boscage was the greenest, there the hum-
ming tribes are mute,
And the loudest goads of silence are the falling nuts
and fruit.

And the orchard's late ripe tributes show the north's
congealing breath,
And the woodland's richest foliage wears the russet
hues of death.

The cricket from a tuft of grass, from fields the twit-
tering swallow,
Bewail the grandeur of summer gone, that autumn
is sure to follow.

While I loitered 'neath a maple or a richer-plumaged
pine,
A rich ray of parting sunshine seemed to kiss this
dirge of mine.

Then a troop of fancies caught me, overpowering
will and sense:
Beautiful as Patmos visions, sweeter-tongued than
Eloquence!

And these vanquish time's assaults, the vagaries of
care and pain,
And when winter blares its coming, they will flute
a summer strain.

A U G U S T.

ADIEU, July! thy bronze-cheeked sister, bland
And fervent-natured, from a lily drinks
Our health; and see her, through the scented chinks
Of honeysuckle, waving in her hand
A stalk of gladiolus for a wand
To conjure with; and on each full bud's head
Is clapt a cap of blue or white or red,—
Yes, red more fiery than a flaming brand!

Rich colorist of our little garden close!
We thank you for this guerdon, yet would ask
A boon for all these burred and tasselled rows
And way-side waifs; and end thy blessed task
By swelling full each lush and pulpy thing
With finer pith, for autumn's gathering.

THE WATERMELON!

O CERES' nursling, from the hot-breathed East!
Though big and graceless in thy dark-green coat
As thy buff-trouserèd brother, come and spice,
This smothering August day, our fruited feast,
As thou hast done for many a king and priest
In other times; and cool the parchèd throat,
The palate please, with many a ripe slice,
With all its juicy wholesomeness increased.

Ay, alien sweetness, we are glad to find
Such frosted, sugared, lusky red and pink
Refreshment, cinetured by a homely rind;
Oh, be to-day our summer meat and drink!
For pulp like this is bread, the juice is wine,
To quench a famishing more keen than mine.

A SUNSET.

THE Rubens of the welkin has delayed
The tumbled clouds, to paint his nimbus there,—
A gorgeous ensign coloring all the air,—
Of pink and red in every tint and shade,
And turquoise blue superbly overlaid
With wan vermillion; then a reckless gush
Of crimson, striped with saffron from his brush,
And this all streaked, and laced with yellow braid!

Oh, what a peerless picture, we avow!
As down the sky his golden-timbered barque,
With purple yards full bent, and golden prow
Set westward, sails, and leaves us in the dark;
But, on the walls in memory's picture-show,
'Twill find a space and wear its natal glow!

ASBURY PARK.

TOWARD the east the spaces were impearled,
A silver bridge from this bare strip of beach
Was laid, beyond the eye's remotest reach;
And near, the anchored yacht, with sails unfurled,

Undulated ; the ocean swelled and hurled,
And carried back its salted treasure-trove ;
And in the west, the storm, like legended Jove,
Enflashed its sudden choler o'er the world.

Yet, best of all, the smile of happy faces,
The merry, social chat of youthful groups
Upon the sand, or by the lake or park ;
While earth reposed in summer's hot embraces,
Nor saw the warning flash across the dark,
Nor heard the billows' still-recurring shocks
Storming the shore, like files of frightless troops ;
Nor felt the breeze that fluffed her moistened locks ;
But dozed and dreamed of peace, like selfless Love,
Ere she had quit her Paradise above !

L I F E.

I HAD not fancied this was life :
A hard, fierce, endless, truceless fight
Of love and truth 'gainst wrong and might :
An army shorn of flag or fife,
Yet war, " war to the knife,"
The battle-cry, if we but hear aright !

A VISION.

I WROUGHT a simple picture when the day
Was printing on earth's brow its farewell kiss,
And fancied each far-darting, fiery ray
The gush of overflow from realms of bliss!

Methought the airs that floated thro' the trees
Brought only on their wings the balm of healing;
That each tall flower, along the bushy leas,
Hued tales of joy, their pleasure not concealing;
That all the grasses inclined by the breeze,
Through which the lucid current crept a-stealing,
Were countless messengers of Hope's decrees;
That moon and steadfast stars were still revealing
Their mysteries and cheer, the earth to please;
And that the season sent a flood of feeling,
So tranquil to this tent and seat of ease,
That my tired head bowed low; awe-struck and
kneeling,
I murmured, "This vast globe, so full of blight
And pain, is yet the dwelling of delight!"

A WISH.

O WIND, now blow the clouds more wide apart,
And let the Prince of Light have amplest sway,
That his resplendent looks may warmly dart
Athwart the highway of retreating Day!
Behold! the smile is sped beyond my sight,
With mind-like swiftness, thro' the filmy air,
And braids with gold the dusky train of Night!
And all the dimning prospect shows more fair.
Yes, the solveless riddle of grass and trees,
And plants and flowers, and streamlets pearled be-
tween,
Is steeped in colors; and, by slow degrees,
My faney wins the deep peace of the scene.

A BROKEN HEART.

DEAREST! would you care
If these tears,
This torn bosom, trembling form,
Typed despair?

Though the word, forsaken,
 Jar my ears,
My true love shall brave the storm,
 And unshaken !

All my wealth of smiles
 Still is yours.
Kisses, too, that speed the feet
 Life's drear miles.
Hand-clasps, words of cheer,
 And heart-cures,—
These are yours, to make more sweet,
 And more dear !

Are these meet for scorn ?
 Answer, No !
For a yes would haunt me ever,
 On and on.
Grant me one kind word,
 Ere the blow
Widely parts our hearts forever,
 Though unheard !

Good-by ! Though the while
 My pierced heart,
How it beateth, yet is pleading
 For one smile !

Clasp me once again,
Ere we part;
Yet for me the constant bleeding
And the pain.

Oh! to bear this life,
And conceal,
While the thought cuts deep and deeper
Like a knife.
I will shut the scroll,
Set the seal.
Come now, Death, the body's reaper,
Free my soul!

A THOUGHT.

WHAT a gift the song of the rhymers
And the thought of the sage!
But to stand in front of an age
And feel its rage,
To know its need and repeat it,
To stem its foe and defeat it;
To win a soul

From vice or folly's revel;
To set its goal
Beyond the present's common level,
In spite of cynic, fool, or devil,—
These are sublimer!

INGRATITUDE.

ONE night a genteel vagabond
Looked in and begged for aid,
And no one seeming to respond,
The louder knocked and prayed,—

“Admit a homeless wanderer,
This rain-drenched, windy night:
My dress and haggard mien aver
My hopeless, wretched plight.”

The boon is given: doffing hat
And mumbling thanks, he stood
Beside the cheerful grate; then sat
And blest and ate the food.

Across, a pretty four-year girl
Lolloed and kept her chair;
Her rounded face and dangling curl
Provoked his lustful stare.

Hunger and thirst at length appeased,
His eyes sought her again:
The child's rare beauty more than pleased,
It stirred his heart of Cain!

By some mishap, this ruthless rough
Was left with her alone:
Raiment and bread were not enough,—
The pearl must be his own!

"HOME, HOME, SWEET HOME!"

THE singer sang the song of songs
With sweetness more than art;
Yet tear-drops glistened in the eyes,
While gladness steeped the heart!

“Home, home, sweet home!” its echoes came
Upon us with a rush :
The roses, listening from an urn,
Put on a finer flush ;

The room assumed a superb guise,
A proud, palatial air,—
The old-time rocker in a nook
Fit for Saint Peter’s chair !

The family portraits, plainly framed,
Seemed of a royal line :
The living ones more fair than they,
And mother’s most benign !

And I, a half-taught, blunt-speeched youth,
Coltish and rough from birth,
Touched by this singing, see more clear
The household’s wholesome worth !

“Home, home, sweet home!” oh, honeyed words !
Without an evil leaven,
To our full hearts thy virgin phrase
Is the full name of Heaven !

REJOICE TO-DAY, YE MEN OF LITTLE FAITH!

REJOICE to-day, ye men of little faith!
And be of cheer, dejected sons of toil!
Our Father, true as ever, brims the soil
And ends with fairest prospects the tried path,
Haunted with sorrow and misfortune's wraith;
And nature holds in bond her wine and oil,
Despite the rascals, deeming earth their spoil,
And envying all that thrifty labor hath.

Let the untaught be schooled, nor play the fool,
And greed and malice feel the rein and spur:
Then comes the golden age, the golden rule,
Of converse sweet as frankincense and myrrh;
And see, as fuller shines truth's quenchless brand,
That love and goodness flow from God's right hand!

THE DAY IS GONE.

THE Day, with all her festive family
Of hours, has quit her terrene residence,
And left unsoled, unmoved, its opulence
Of jewel, statue, painting, drapery,
Banquet and game, and show and jubilee;
But wrote and carried off a record hence
Of mortal dreams and hopes and dire events,
To map the trend of human destiny.

And Father Time, with errless aim unspent,
Blots out the error and transcribes the good,
Knowing that Right is still omnipotent;
That Love must reign, and Truth be understood;
But sets among the instruments of use
The probe and caustic for the new abuse.

SYMPATHY.

IF thou wouldst learn thy brother's woe,
Unbare thy shoulders to the blow!

Or press the needed bread and wine
First to his lips, prepared for thine!

Wouldst know the pains of such deep scars?
Tread on the white, thrice-heated bars!

Wouldst save his soul from sin and vice?
Prepare thyself for sacrifice,—

Thy time and talents, heartful dower,
And all that gives thee fame and power.

These are the gifts, the things unpriced,
Hallowed and blest, and used by Christ!

A PASSING THOUGHT.

LIFE's sweetest emotion was never expressed,
Nor outspoken the secret of pain;
The eloquent throbbing is shut in the breast,
And the glorious vision is celled in the brain.

Yea, mould and darkness the end would seem,
If thought and endeavor knew not this,—
That however regal the idealist's dream,
'Tis only a symbol of future bliss!

A THANKSGIVING.

To God let every creature say,—
I praise Thee, this Thanksgiving Day,
For temporal gain and future good,
For shelter, raiment, warmth, and food;

For kindness used amid turmoil;
For patience born of life-long toil;
For upright thought and self-control,
Balanced on conscience and the soul.

For strength and firmness in the right;
For freedom barring lawless might;
For every gift to toil and art
That helped the mind and reached the heart.

For curative balm and discipline
That lulled the fret and curbed the sin;
For friends and kindred kindly spared;
For peace and gladness known and shared.

For promptings of the still, small voice
That bade our drooping hearts rejoice;
For trust that would not heed denial;
For grace that braced the soul in trial.

For hope, without which life were dross;
For love that sanctified our loss,—
For these, dear Lord, our lips respond,
And own the mystic, conscious bond!

Bring fruitage from the season's hoard
To deck the festal, social board,
And, seated, ask our Christ the Priest
To bless and sanctify the feast.

Yea, bring to each the spirit thrill
That hints His love is with us still;

To feel, however pass the hours,
A goodly heritage is ours!

Our mother's God, to whom belong,
By right supreme, both prayer and song,
Despite our selfish words and fears,
Go with us through remaining years.

JOHN B. GOUGH.

I SAT, a charmed hearer, in the throng
That smiled or melted at his eloquence:
Now light with humor, pungent to the sense,
Or sweet with pathos, touching as a song;
Or, warming to the theme, his soul intense
Let loose upon the flinching backs of wrong
And callid vice the swift, satiric thong;
Yet, with his speech, steadfast benevolence
And Christian sympathy went arm in arm,
Through prison glooms and pest-haunts of the poor,
To save the wretch from worse than demon's charm:
For he had fallen and knew the only cure;
Yea, bravely worked where he was needed most,
And death surprised him, armed and at his post!

W O R K.

WORK is the guardian of our lives:
Alone through her the good survives.

The genius of the schools of art,—
The Queen Dido of every mart.

The patroness of every craft
That delves the glebe or carves the shaft.

She found man in the cave of naught,
And clothed his naked flesh and thought.

And sowed the field, and reared the dome,
And changed his cavern to a home!

And pointing upward to the height
Where Wisdom is enthroned in light,

Says, “Go and win the right to sit
Beside her chair; the mire and pit

“Of vice and sin are under ban,
And should not clog or stop the man!”

And we, who love and bless her name,
Proclaim her Mother of all Fame!

CITY SIGHTS.

IN the east, immolates with a thousand arrows
The morning, the clouds, and humid air,
And Dian her silvery radiance narrows,
And the earth reflects her wordless prayer;
Then the chatter and whir of the quarrelling sparrows,—
Alert and bold and wary of snare,—
On the watch for a meal 'mid the cars and barrows,
Then away to a haunt in the square.

Then the steps of the worker and artisan,
On to toil ere the passage is plain,
Whose dominion is girt with a structure's span,
With its struggle and trial and strain;
Tho' the body is bent o'er the puzzling plan,
Which increases its weakness and pain,
Yet surely is fashioned the future of man
By each action of muscle and brain.

Then the boy and the girl enliven the masses,
So early to feel life's discipline;
Some, faithful to duty, will honor the classes,
And alas! others sink with the sin.

The brave will see gardens instead of morasses;
Others death at the end of the din:
Some die of the toil in the depths of the passes,
But God's proclamation is,—they win!

A CITY WAIF.

ONLY an abandoned woman,
Lost to home and friends and fame;
Reft of love that souls the human,
Wrinkled by the hand of shame.

Only an unnoticed burden,—
Once a mother's darling one,—
And not one sweet smile for guerdon,
None to mourn when life is done.

Marred by blows that sin has dealt her,
Is there one to cool her lips,
Check her hunger, grant her shelter,—
Nobler yet, forgive her slips?

Yes, a maiden strong in kindness
Breaks the hold of passion's clutch;
Clothes the form and clears the blindness,
Gives the conscience moral touch.

And the heart afaint is lifted,
Rich impulses stirred anew ;
From the grain the chaff is sifted,
That the good may spring to view.

A new soul is now elected
To the parliament of love :
Pledged to ideas once neglected
And to deeds God whispers of !

THE TRIUMPH OF RIGHT.

'Tis a miserable world, the down-trodden shriek ;
Life a burden of trouble and pain ;
And health scarcely ruddies the lips and the cheek,
Ere it is taken and tortured and slain.

Yes, slain to the greed of the merchant oppressor,—
The smooth Pizarro of modern times,—
Who, posturing to Mammon, his priest and confessor,
Is blest and shriven of all his crimes.

Is Justice now impaled, the strong intercessor ?
Or Truth heart-broken or been deceived ?
Or doth Right make head, tho' the ignoble press her,
All robed in the fame she has achieved ?

Is Love and Hope and Mercy incarcerated,
Too ill and famished to break the bars?
And Freedom, the loved one, the heavenly-mated,
Hath she borne in vain her thousand scars?

Ah! these were my thoughts in a moment of sadness,
Vexed and stung by the evils I saw;
I had forgotten Miriam's timbrel of gladness
Was clashed to Right on the Red Sea's shore!

Sing ye, skilled and unskilled children of the Uses,
Your trophies shall head Progression's throng:
Right endeavor shall foil the buccaneer's ruses,
And trumpet the fall and death of Wrong!

QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

ONE glance of Morning paints the furrowed sea,
And sets the inland free.
What mystery?

The waves, still roaring, dash the pebbled sands,
All held by unseen hands.
Who understands?

The wind outruns the billows' foamy feet,
And chants a lay more sweet.
Who can repeat?

The glances of Jehovah pierce the whole,

And, stronger, smite the soul.

He doth control.

The flood of moments beats its fleshly sides,

With joy and grief for tides.

His wisdom guides.

Whether the tones of being touch the brain,

In ecstasy or pain,

He hears the strain!

FRIENDSHIP'S OFFER.

WHETHER the morning be replete

With nature's simples, fresh and sweet,

Or arched with clouds and flecked with sleet,—

I reach warm hands to thee.

Whether good fortune freight thy ship,

Or envy blare each thoughtless slip,

Or sorrow's goblet press thy lip,—

I reach warm hands to thee.

Whether the crowd disdain thy name,

Or praise it with the tongue of fame,

Acknowledging thy justful claim,—

I reach warm hands to thee.

Whether thy face be one of beauty,
Or the hollow cheeks of care and duty,
Too harsh and hard for folly's booty,—
I reach warm hands to thee.

Whether thy form be one of vigor
And gracefulness, or frail and meagre,
Crippled and drawn by age's rigor,—
I reach warm hands to thee.

Whether thy mind be an Apollo's,
Or one that only gropes and follows,
With eyes in mists and feet in hollows,—
I reach warm hands to thee.

And when our souls have voyaged death's river,
And stand on shores of the forever,
To wear the palm and praise the Giver,—
I'll reach warm hands to thee.

THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1876.

HAIL, Sovereign Day, that heard the voice
Of Freedom sing the nation's birth,
On this small plot of hallowed earth,
We bless thy rising and rejoice!

We swell our century jubilee:
The nation's march and grand increase,
The hirtless victories of peace,
The vaster glories yet to be!

To-day great Peace sojourns with us,
And bids us search our mighty claims,
Our social traits, and ethic aims,
And more, to fill the stimulus

Bestowed by cultured energies:
The gifts of Art almost divine;
The Midas heaps of well and mine;
The helpful tools and engineries;

The loom's rich silk and fleecy bales;
The tributes of the plough and spade;
And every fine and costly aid
That mans stout Traffic's willing sails.

And these write welcome o'er the bars
And bulwarks of our righteous laws;
And aliens wed to Freedom's cause
Find safety 'neath the stripes and stars.

And 'mid the fife and bugle's blast,
The pageantries and martial dins,
An age of truth and right begins,
With grander hopes than all the past.

And far beyond this bannered park,
These shouting hosts and booming guns,
The burst and blaze of stars and suns,
Progress has set her onward mark!

And while we reap the teeming sod,
And deck our peace-endowed abodes,
May we affirm the spirit codes,—
The higher laws that come from God!

A POET'S DEATH.

“PERHAPS I'll sing my song to-day,”
A stricken poet sung;
But ere the world could praise her lay,
Death tripped her tuneful tongue.

And now the song, since grown intense
With life and beauty, pleads'
Before a juster audience,
And wins the meed of needs!

A COMPARISON.

I SAW a mountain cloud hang motionless,—
A vapory splendor of fantastic mould,—
Its white and wedge-like peaks were flushed with
gold ;
And midway down, a crimson loveliness
Was finely traced upon its silvery dress ;
But at the base, each vale and ridge and wold
Was wrapt in dismal blackness, fold on fold.
And then, methought, youth, fame, and happiness
Were like the gilded summits of that cloud ;
Ay, placed on heights above our path of life ;
And we, the weak, the fair, the gay, the proud,—
Their fond adorers in this den of strife,—
Can only catch a glimpse of their fair forms.
E'en while each peerless shape of beauty wins
Our hearts, lo, evil flits with its tormenting swarms
To sting, and life releases all its dins.

AT DAY'S DECLINE.

THE day declines apace, the shadows fall;
The distant river wears a bluer mist
Against the dun background of forest wall;
The clouds are prisoned in the breeze's fist;
The birds conclude their merry festival;
The moon and stars encrust the amethyst
And bind our senses in a golden thrall;—
Yet, what are these, when some dear heart is missed,
When the belovèd is beyond recall;
When the dear form we fondled, clasped, and kissed
Is gone, it is a loss that saddens all!
Then lonely is the walk and shaded tryst.

THE SEA AND SKY.

At eve, the wayward sea,
As if through very envy of the land,
Did rush in wildest glee,
With wave on wave, upon the shrinking sand;
Yet there it ceased to roam,
And wasted all its wondrous strength in foam.

I turned from that fierce sight
And saw great nature's genius, as of old,
 Unveil a realm of light
In the far west, one vast expanse of gold !
 And to the fancy's eye
Perpetual summer ruled both earth and sky.

One metaphor of life :
Its marvellous displays of force and speed ;
 Its toils and cares and strife ;
Its frothy speech for pith of noble deed ;
 And its sublimest wave,
Only dashing on time's strand to find a grave !

The other type of rest
And of that new Jerusalem to be !
 Where Love indeed is guest,
And angels hymn of immortality :
 Where Heaven mirrors of
Our God, His crown, and throne, and deeds of love.

A SABBATH'S END.

THE sweet hymn ceased, and in the room
The pathos of the pure, rich strain
 Appeared to kindle once again,
Like sudden sunshine after gloom.

Or like a heavenly solace sent
To silence each discordant thing ;
Or like great David's fingering
Of peace's song-stringed instrument.

It tingled the octaves of the soul
And they outswelled a new refrain,
Of loftiest aim of heart and brain,
Of speedier progress to the goal.

Of blood revitalized more strong
And timed to pulse of use and life ;
Of hands that have abandoned strife,
To aid the poor and toil-worn throng.

Of clearer eyes to see the wrong ;
Also the good and use of man ;
Of ears to hear the cosmic Plan
Announced each day in nature's song.

Of voice in tune to swell a note
Of the on-going praise to God ;
The praise that rises from the sod,
And hurries on from mote to mote !

Nor can the jars and sounds that leaven
The strange, mad tumults of the street
Come near, when God and mortal meet
Upon the stairs which wind to Heaven !

A WORK-DAY'S CLOSE.

THE music was Von Suppe's "Poet and Peasant,"
And it is always present!

Again the organ peals each subtle note,
Not loud, nor harsh, nor overmuch
(Our sister's feathery touch

Had charmed its mental throat),
To stamp upon the willing brain
The spirit of the strain,
And draw within the pale of music's art
The fascinated heart.

And its harmonic rise and swell
And dream-like cadences,
Were like a crystal draught from pleasure's well,
Without its bitter lees.

Surfeitless treat of honeyed sounds,
Forerunners of the songs to be!

You come like angel voices
To hush life's base and cloying noises,
Whose only bounds
Are the limitless limits of Memory!

THE MAD LOVER.

His home and shelter is a cell,
His constant guests the pangs of hell;

An unkempt head and bearded face,
Without one sign of manly grace;

And awkward arms and hands are shown,
And finger-nails to talons grown!

An uncouth shape, to say the least,
That growls and glares like maddened beast!

What power had brought him to this lair,
And stamped his features with despair?

Ah! in his heart a thoughtless jilt
Had thrust her dagger to the hilt!

And plunged so deeply, that the pain
Shot upwards and destroyed the brain,

And left behind a body bowed,
Whose robe of peace will be a shroud!

Yes, left a form to struggle on,
With love and hope and reason gone,

Till Death, in pity, broke the thrall,
And made his anguish known to all.

A P R A Y E R.

HEAVENLY FATHER, on 'Thy throne,
Near me whilst I only groan,
Nearest when I am alone,
Lull my aching head and breast,
And accede to my request,—
 “Grant me rest.”

I am but a publican,
Hurt in heart by passion's ban
And the caste of wealth and clan;
All my failures are confess
To the one who knows me best,—
 “Grant me rest.”

Thought is slow to learn Thy skill;
Hands more slow to work Thy will;
Yet I know Thou wilt fulfil

All I quit, when vext and prest,—
Thou art goodness manifest,—
“ Grant me rest.”

Only rest the flesh desires,
And the brain, tho' it aspires;
Thine own rest the soul requires,
When of all things else possest,—
Ah! when of all things bereft,
“ Grant it rest.”

A CHRISTIAN'S DEATH.

THAT Sabbath day was one of heavenly peace,
A heavenly beauty rained down from the skies,
A token of God's love,—may it increase,—
Or else the world was seen with clearer eyes;
The fresh-blued ocean laved the shadeless sand
In softer tones, charmed by an unseen wand.

The northwest stirred the waves and bland sea air,
And reinspired the pine-tree's balsamed breath;
And Summer, Heaven's aspirant, looked so fair,
There seemed no room for strife, or grief, or death;
Yet, one whose step is lighter than the foam
Tarried to bear a patient spirit home.

Within a room which hushed the ocean's roar,
And caught the sun to dull its painful glare,
A dying Christian mother lay, no more
To feel the pangs of grim disease or care;
But heavenly aspirations filled their place,
And smiles of saintly triumph lit her face;

And round her pillow prest each weeping one;
But she, through opened window, saw good-by
Writ in the yellow letters of the sun,
And murmured, "Ere yon light forsakes the sky,
My soul will try its wings across the sea
Whose waters touch my feet to set me free;

"And nearer press the sainted gone before,
Crowned with the crown like that which shall be
mine,

And beckoning me, each face like that of yore,
But angel pure, haloed with light divine;
I hear their garments rustle, feel their touch,—
Farewell, my children, trust in God, and such——"

These last faint words were smothered in her throat,
The hands relaxed, the brow and lips grew chill
Yet, in the dark, hushed room, there seemed to float
A mystic voice that whispered of her still!
A soul was gone, to wealth and fame unknown,
Yet God, the Lover, claimed her for His own!

THE QUESTIONED SOUL.

UNFETTERED Soul! tell of the years,—
How do they pass, what do they bring?
Come they like Niobe, in tears,
Or bring they Ceres' harvesting ?

Bring they burdens, losses, grief,
Or gifts and titles and domains,
Or ills that cannot know relief,
Or thrift and labor's honest gains ?

Whate'er they bring, may love and hope
Repose our feeble wills to bear ;
Then we no more shall blindly grope,
But find contentment anywhere !

A SOLILOQUY.

ALONE with self, yet not alone,
For my prone soul was heard to moan,—
Bruised by the goads of sin and strife
That ever war on active life.

Alone! the very echo's length
Provoked the soul's unconquered will
To summon all its godlike strength
And tell the flesh 'twas sovereign still!

It seemed the soul, though faint and bowed,
Possessed a fount of youth within
That purled of rest, whene'er the din
And struggle of the day grew loud.

Perhaps the spheres that just had set
Were jewels of an amulet
To scare away misfortune's wraith
And woo the shining feet of Faith.

Perhaps it dreamed the morning light
(Whose roses flush the Orient)
Would ease the pangs of many a slight,
And yield supreme encouragement.

Perchance the flowers upon the slope—
Each beryl-hued cymbal, colored bell,
And mottled trumpet's sound and smell—
Were culminating in a hope!

Perhaps it deemed the bulks of fleece,
In their huge wains, were shapes of calm;
The dew, but lucid eyes of peace,
The tropic air, a soothing psalm!

Or deemed the bird's shrill song would quell
The ghosts that haunt us to the end ;
The glad "God bless you!" of the friend,
More dear than sprigs of asphodel.

Or else these summer signs of cheer
But brought God's benison more near,—
The God less loyal to His state
Than to a soul disconsolate !

The organ emphasized the ballad's strain,
And lent its music Merlin influence,
To penetrate the feeling's fleshly fence,
Into the citadel of joy and pain,—
Into the great Pantheon of the brain,
Whose gods are deathless gods of soul and sense ;
Where Memory hives the deeds of excellence,
And Beauty's visions swell the endless train.

And when this thrilling strain had entered in,
The other lords resolve to abdicate,
And vote her chief commandant of the place ;
The help of conscience to dislodge the sin,
And keep out Error storming wall and gate ;
Eager to rob the mind of peace and grace ;
But now the weakest entrances are barred,
And this sweet strain inspires the dauntless guard.

A WINTER SIMILE.

THE air-born snow was flung from Winter's hand,
A spotless outcast, between morn and eve;
And silently it wrought a path as grand
And wonderful as summer's hand could weave
Of grasses, leaves, and flowers. Poor fugitive,
Alas! thou hast not many hours to live;
Yet comest not to smite, but to relieve
The frost-barred seedlings of the famished land.

Thus Duty comes immaculate to me:
Serene and passionless, yet truest friend,—
A Pythias when want and sorrow blend,
And strong to demonstrate love's sovereign plea;
And shielding Virtue, too, in all its forms,
Lest both would perish in life's direful storms.
Wed right to mercy, truth to charity,
And it shall walk unbaffled to the end.

DUTY'S VOICE.

THE noonday sun, a barren ridge of sand,
Lonely as Enoch Arden's island strand,—
The tumult and the foam-dust of the sea,—
'Twere all that welcomed me.

And yet a glorious thrill inflamed my blood,
As swiftly as the sunbeams strike the flood,
For Duty, the evangel, sought my hand
To learn my heart's demand.

“ Art thou despondent looking on the sea?
Thou knowest thy will and reason are as free.
Oh! may they choose to do the grandest act,—
Mould thought a stainless fact.

“ Then, character shall dazzle like the sun,
And gather glory when Sol's goal is won;
And God will show more splendid spheres to man
Than sun or ocean span!

“ Then, thought shall energize progression's arms
To rear the finest domes, the richest farms;
To wield a strength more potent than the sea's,
By labor's engineries.

“Then, mercy win the heart to bring relief
To hungry forms, to hearts impaled by grief;
To those that sink beneath affliction’s rod,
And bring them nigher God.

“Then, love shall come, the soul’s unbounded sun,
To celebrate the deeds of kindness done,—
The smile, the clasp, the gift of succor given,
And bear them up to Heaven.

“Oh! may thou choose me for thy counsellor,
When conscience, thought, and will, and feeling err;
And if, as I desire, thou dost receive me,
I vow to never leave thee.”

THE CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

THE crystal pledge and windy shout
Announce the date of Christmas pleasures;
But our blithe hearts hum summer measures,
And sparkle like the white without.

What care for winter’s writ of frost?
When overflow of kindredship,
Finds vent in talk and hurtless quip,
Without one gem of pleasure lost.

What care for winter's whirligig?
When housemates ring a jubilee,
And our young sisters deck the tree
With pretty favors, branch and twig.

The tinselled trifle, pied glass ball,
And mimie flowers and fruits and birds,
And gorgeous cards, with sugared words,
And "Merry Christmas" crowning all!

The tree is decked; the gifts are set
To trip the early, anxious feet;
While all the dropping leaves repeat:
"Good-will and peace shall triumph yet."

O tree of life and joy and hope,
Whose rootlets twine in hearts of clay,
Whose fruitage offering is to-day,—
No richer fell on Eden's slope!

And as it falls and we partake,
May we forego the daily fret,
And every mouthing of regret,—
The brain its scheme, the heart its ache.

And while we hold life's cup abrim,
May we extend it to the poor
Who knock and plead at mercy's door,
And ask alms in the name of Him!

THE NEW YEAR.

BETWEEN the leafless pine and oak,
The chapel's bells' dolorous breath
Declares by every dirge-like stroke,
"The Old Year falls a prey to death."

And with it many a fond pursuit
That promised health and rest and cheer;
Whose only yield was Dead-Sea fruit;
Whose leaves of hope were long since sere!

But hark! it strikes a joyous peal,
And lo! the New Year strides in view;
We welcome it for woe or weal,
While to the past we nod adieu.

CHRISTMAS-TIME.

THE hours wheel on the Christmas-time,
The noblest theme for sweetest rhyme;
The day love's cycle was begun,
And God and man were shown as one!

YESTERDAY.

I SAW the ghost of Yesterday
Stand o'er its burial-stone,
While Time, the mourner, bent and gray,
Not seeing, seemed to say,
“ He sleeps alone.”

He hushed his father's grief, and said,
“ The flesh it perisheth ;
But that which is the heart and head,
And touch, and tone, and tread,
Defieth Death !

“The four-and-twenty hours were steeds,
By which I ranged all places:—
I urged the soul that onward speeds,
I balmed the heart that bleeds,
I kissed new faces!

“The seeds of good which I have sown
Shall hang forth fruit to-morrow;
And where my breath was clearest blown,
Health stole the sick man’s groan,
Joy prisoned sorrow.

“I met Love; went with her along
Through hamlet, field, and mart;
She said, ‘We’ll help the harrowed throng,
And war to right the wrong
Before we part.’

“Truth knew me, called me precious now,
And sought my fellowship;
Yes, wrote achievement on my brow,
And pressed his secret vow
Upon my lip!

“I walked between Hope and Despair:
One haggard, thin, and wan;
The other smiled and sang an air
So sweet, the troops of care
Marched swiftly on!

“ My constant friends were toil and use,
And zeal imbued with right ;
And courage that accepts no truce,
But swords the old abuse,
And wins the fight.

“ I live in actions that were wrought
To help God’s wondrous plan ;
And all I spake or did was fraught
With His unceasing thought
Of beast and man !

“ When Time’s sharp scythe shall cease to mow,
His hour-glass be forgot ;
My brother days that sleep below
Shall with me rise and know
A worthier lot ! ”

THE END.







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